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THE ENGLISH REVIEW

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Edited by AUSTIN HARRISON

JULY 1915

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A Minor Prophet	R. B. Cunninghame Graham
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THE WAR OF LIBERATION

From a Journal (iii)	May Sinclair
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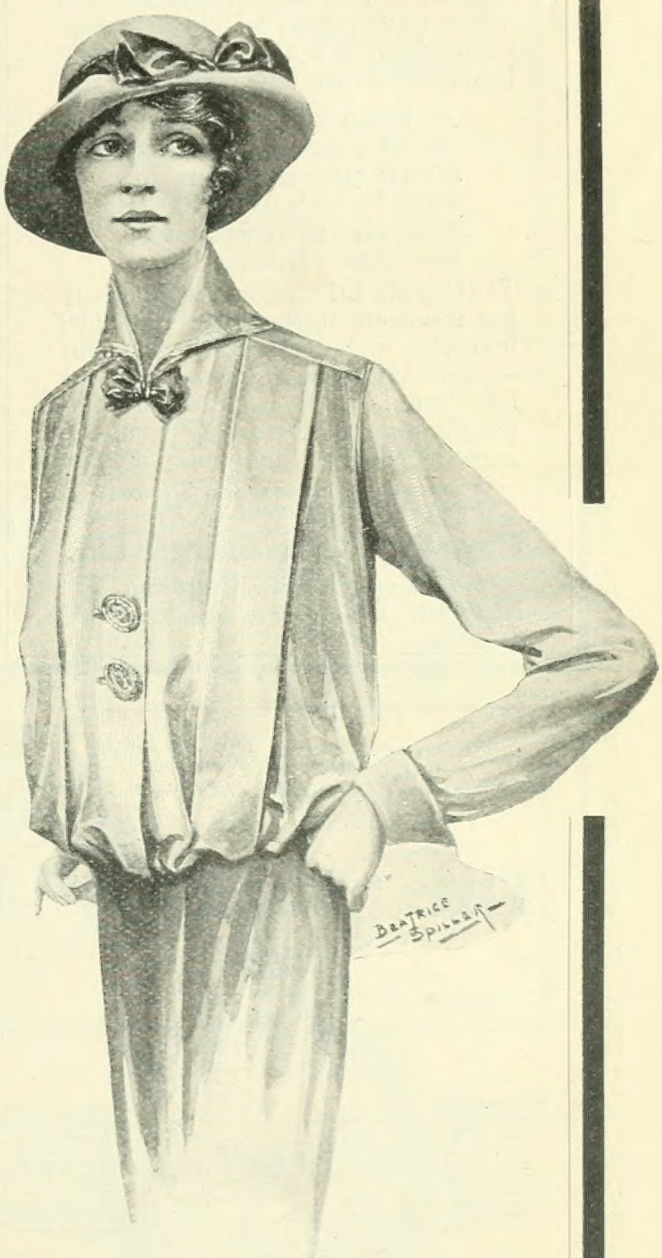

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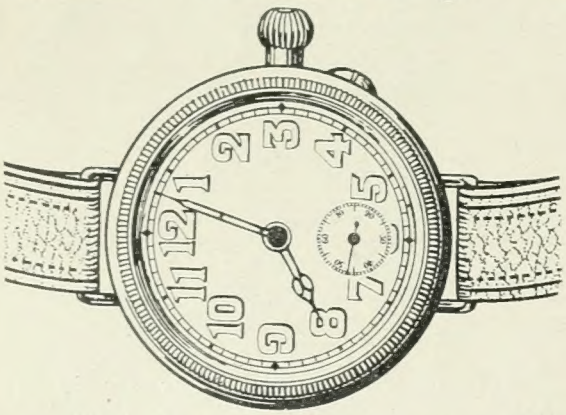

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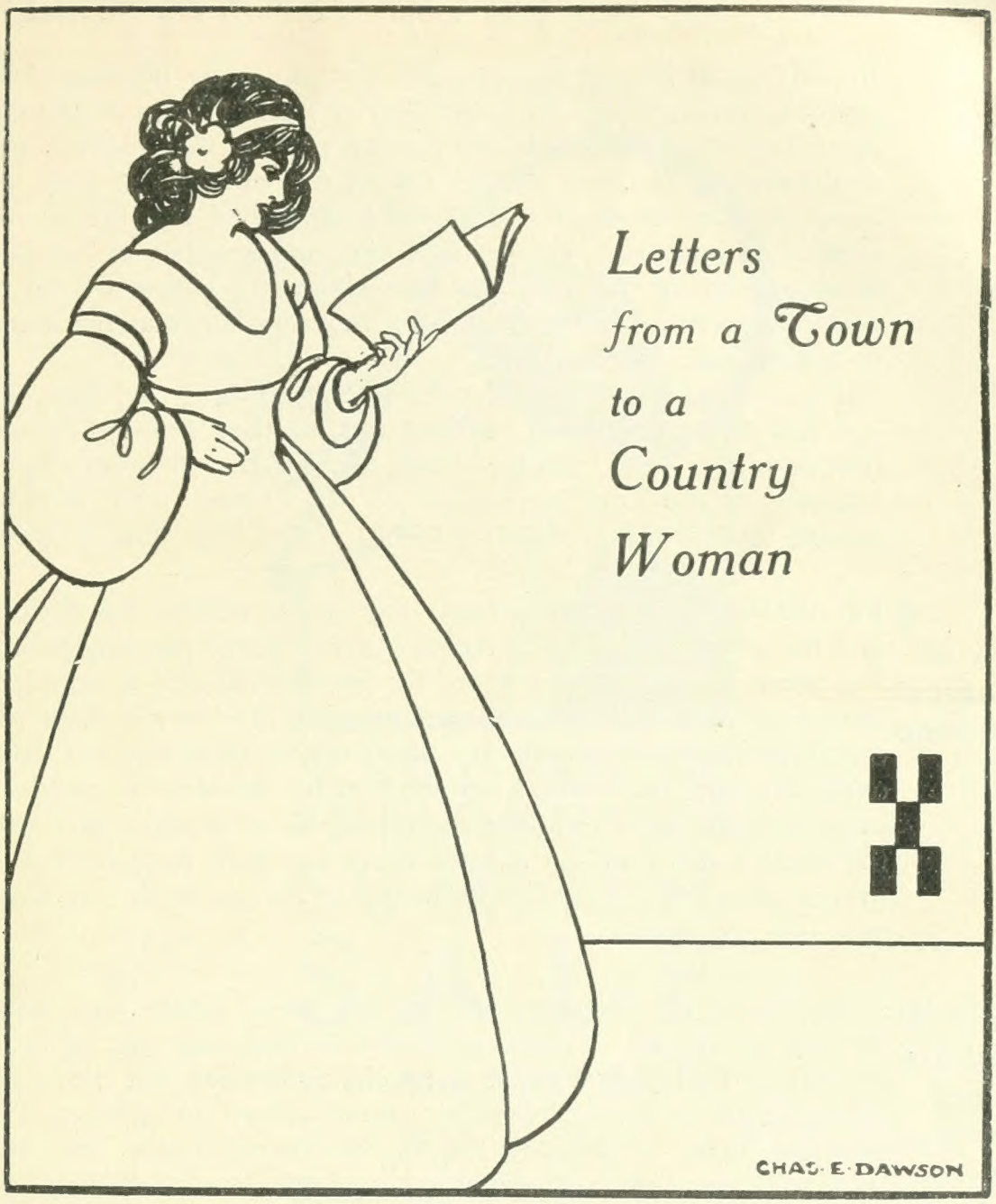

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Letters from a Town to a Country Woman

If you would be smart nowadays you must be inconspicuously gowned, although no one would ever conceive this to be the case, were they merely to study the fashion papers, that make a point of illustrating the new models for all the world as if they were being worn by lay-figures from the Chamber of Horrors or some antiquated museum. Closer inspection and analysis of the same, however, reveals the fact that the nightmare effects of the new modes lie in the way the frocks are drawn rather than the manner in which they are designed.

For no matter how beautiful the new toilettes may be, they could not fail to look hideous, caricatured as they are by decadent fashion-artists who display them on Noah's Ark-like figures collared to the ears, crinolined to the ankles with ill-shaped angular bodies fashioned after Cubist rather than human lines.

The Return of the Natural Waist Line

¶ Put the fashions of the present day on to bodies less distorted and the effect in nine cases out of ten will prove pleasing enough. For when all is said and done, the new modes are a very great deal more rational than they have been for some time past. Skirts are shorter (though they need not be comically so); moreover they are full enough to allow their wearers to walk with ease, which is more than they were able to do a while ago; while the loose bodices with a natural waist line back once more in its proper place can, with a little adaption, be made to suit almost any type of figure.

Clothes as they are worn, not as they are drawn

¶ Indeed the study of clothes as they are worn, rather than clothes as they are drawn, reveals much that is charming and becoming as well as displaying a great many characteristics that the woman who wishes to be well-dressed cannot afford to ignore. First amongst these is the new vogue for uneven hems. So much so is this the case that the skirt of to-day is already beginning to look old-fashioned if it is not finished off with harlequin points, kilted pleats, or an edge that terminates in neatly rounded points like the petal of a flower, which in the case of tailor-made costumes are very often bound with fine military braid or a piping of satin that exactly matches the colour of the skirt itself. The best ideas concerning the vagaries and the beauties of the new skirts are to be gathered from a charmingly illustrated little pamphlet, entitled, "Smart Skirts for Country and Street Wear," which will be sent free to all who apply for the same by Messrs. Debenham and Freebody of Wigmore Street. This contains illustrations of all manner of skirts of the latest designs for which this firm hold such an unrivalled reputation, for every skirt sold by this firm is not only beautifully cut by expert artist tailors, but all are made from the best and most up-to-date materials.

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Fancy Footwear

¶ Needless to say the abridged length of the new skirts calls for the greatest care concerning shoes and stockings. For the moment, at all events, dense black stockings that show no hint of open-work and no embroidery save finely worked clocks are all the rage—and although fancy foot-gear in the form of light-topped boots and shoes that lace up at the side instead of the front, and show light decorative heels, are still largely worn by a great many women—fancy styles of this description have been discarded for some time past by the best-dressed women, who are wearing in place of them high-heeled and beautifully cut patent leather shoes that once more demonstrate the gracefulness of long pointed toes. Coloured *suède* shoes dyed to exactly match the colour of the frocks with which they are worn are also to be seen—but these do not look nearly so smart worn with the new full skirts as the patent leather variety. The best boots and shoes procurable in London just now are to be found in the new boot and shoe department just opened at Messrs. Marshall and Snelgrove's, of Vere Street, Oxford Street, where everything that is newest and most refined in well-fitting foot-wear is to be seen. Particularly suitable for summer wear is a very neat lace-up shoe, made of the softest *glacé* kid, with patent leather toe caps, which although very *chic* and smart, is delightfully easy to walk in, even in the hottest weather. This and many other lilustrations of new ideas in boots and shoes will be found in the new boot and shoe booklet which this firm has issued for the London and the holiday season.

Hats that make a Sensation

¶ The hat that has made the greatest sensation of this week is a real novelty, inasmuch as it showed the new picture shape that is being so successfully introduced by Paquin this season. Made of palest pink chiffon and covered with a flat frill of black net and a wreath of exquisitely fine black Paradise tufts, this model created a hush of admiration when it made its appearance at Rumpelmayer's tea-rooms the other afternoon—for there is no ignoring the fact that this year Paquin's hats show an originality and a beauty of line that stamps them as superior to all others.

Worn with it was one of the new long transparent black lace coats, simply held in place by a black satin band, and finished off with an open-fronted "Dickey" collar of the same fabric.

The only other wrap worthy of note was a revival of the Cavalier cape of last season, now, alas! so hopelessly out of date; but which has re-appeared in a new guise fashioned of soft uncrushable black satin lined with cream colour. Shaped like a bolero in front, with short, cape-like sleeves that reached only as far as the elbow, the cape was allowed to lengthen out at the back, where it fell in a long sheer line as far as the knees, imparting a particularly graceful and slender appearance to its wearer.

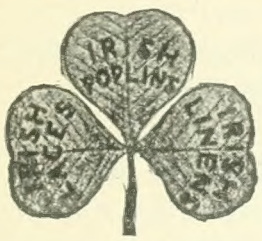
The Newest Hat for wear with Tailor-made Costumes

¶ Before passing on from the subject of new millinery one must not forget to mention the novelty of the moment, introduced by Paquin. This is a delightfully shaped broad-brimmed sailor hat made of fine shepherd's plaid, black and white taffeta silk tightly stretched over the brim, and arranged in a wholly novel fashion on the low crown. The only trimming is a plain white satin ribbon bow and band that passes round the crown and is tied at one side, the bow being finished off with a white rose showing inner petals of black, which is extremely effective. Underneath the brim is a lining of white aerophane bound with a broad band of the checked silk. The effect of this hat worn with a smart black *glacé* frock or a neat blue serge tailor-made costume is extremely *chic*, and nothing more effective for morning wear in town or for a country hat has ever been designed.

A Household Bargain

¶ Coming to matters concerning the house, one must not overlook the fact that at the summer sale at Messrs. Debenham and Freebody's some quite extraordinary bargains in beautiful Filet lace table-centres, piano-covers, bedspreads, and chair-backs are being offered at prices that have never been touched before. These consist of an entire stock bought from an Italian merchant who disposed of his stock at something like half its usual price on account of the war.

These include some quite remarkable pieces of beautiful lace,



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which are copies of old museum specimens, and rank amongst the finest examples of the Italian lace-makers' art that have ever been offered for sale in London, while the prices at which they are being disposed of renders them well within the reach of buyers who have not been able to afford such luxuries hitherto.

Embroidered Linen Tray Cloths.

¶ Another notable feature of this Summer Sale of household linens are some very inexpensive and extremely dainty embroidered linen tray-cloths, which will be offered for sale at something like half their original prices. These are adorned with a delicate trace of very fine embroidery, the work having all the appearance of the most beautiful broidery Anglaise, while the dainty scalloped edge is a great feature. Even cheaper still are some figured embroidered muslin table-centres and tray-mats, finished off with real hand-made lace borders. These have been specially produced by a well-known French firm, who put the work in hand so as to make work for their needlewomen during the past few months, and they represent one of those rare and quite unique bargains that are so seldom to be picked up over here. These mats, which measure seventeen inches square, would look well for use on polished dining-tables, while a good many are being adapted as covers for light-coloured cushions, or used for dressing-table covers.

For the Charitable

¶ For the charitable, especially those who are interesting themselves in providing clothing for the wounded soldiers in hospitals and convalescent homes, or in large bodies of troops going out to the front, this sale offers a remarkable bargain in a very large consignment of army grey shirtings, which are identical with those supplied in very large quantities to the War Office. Owing to a breach of contract by the suppliers, Messrs. Debenham and Freebody are left with a very large quantity of these shirtings on their hands, which they are taking the opportunity of disposing of at a substantial reduction that represents but two-thirds of the ordinary price. This flannel (patterns of which will be sent to all who apply for the same) is the cheapest to be found in London to-day, and it is especially recommended for the making of really good pyjamas as well as dressing-gowns and shirts for the sick and wounded. Ready-made shirts of this same material are likewise to be bought at Debenham's sale, at the cost of one guinea per dozen less than the regular price. These shirts are made in the regulation army pattern, the same as has been supplied to the Regular Army and the Territorials, and they are guaranteed to be unshrinkable and extremely durable.

Catering for "War" Entertaining

¶ With so little entertaining taking place the once despised "tea-party" is fast becoming a fashionable function, and a great many hostesses who hitherto have found themselves far too busy with social activities to put aside a day for seeing their friends in their own houses, are now once more reviving the "At Home" day, when between the hours of four and six they dispense tea and cakes to any of their friends and acquaintances who care to call. Through the revival of this custom has arisen a demand for all manner of dainty *pâtisserie,* which this season has been made a

THE ENGLISH REVIEW

Edited by Austin Harrison

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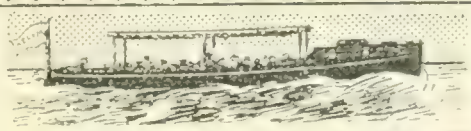

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most successful feature of at John Barker's in High Street, Kensington, who have been fortunate enough to engage the services of a well-known high-class confectioner, who has not only studied the question of cake-making in all the leading capitals in Europe, but who is extremely clever in producing the most up-to-date and varied assortment of fancy cakes and rich *pâtisserie* suitable for afternoon tea. These are doubly welcome just now, as not only do they ring a very welcome change on the old varieties which every hostess is more than tired of serving, but, although moderate in price they are all made from the very best and the freshest ingredients, for it is the rule in this model and thoroughly up-to-date bakery that no substitutes for butter or eggs are allowed to be used.

A New Variety of Biscuits

¶ Yet another boon to housekeepers who are looking out for variety where food is concerned are the delicious and nutritive body-building biscuits made by the Wallace Food Co.

These are something quite out of the ordinary, as they contain the various food elements needed by the body in such a well-balanced form that they not only act as an aid to digestion but as a remedy for numerous ills.

The great recommendation for these biscuits is that they are all made without yeast or chemical raising ingredients, which makes them very digestible. Procurable in large or small quantities and made in some forty odd varieties, they are invaluable for lunch, afternoon tea or picnics. This same firm has also introduced a new kind of food, called Sun-Food (Regd.) prepared from sun-ripened fruits and nuts of the very finest quality, all of which have been carefully cleaned before use. These fruitarian cakes are extremely palatable, and put up into small compress tablets are an ideal way of sending fruit out to the troops, while doctors are loud in their praise for general use in the nursery and at the breakfast- or tea-table.

Electrically Roasted Coffee

¶ One must also make a very special mention of the new Wallaceite Coffee, which seems to have at last solved the difficulty of obtaining properly-made and well-flavoured coffee in the ordinary British household. The secret of the delicious flavour of this coffee lies in the fact that it is roasted by electric heat, so that no poisonous fumes of any sort can affect it or pervert the delicacy of its flavour. Made from a skilful blend of the choicest selected coffees, including Mocha, this blend is guaranteed to be absolutely free from any kind of adulteration, and, put up in airtight tins, it presents the nearest approach to the delicious French breakfast coffee yet presented to the general public. The Wallace "P.R." Foods Co., Ltd., Dept. 48 Tottenham Lane, Hornsey, London, N., make a special offer of samples of a variety of biscuits, coffee, sun-food, &c., for sixpence, post paid in the United Kingdom.

MARY MARSH.

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Facing first matter.

THE
ENGLISH REVIEW
JULY, 1915

To the Unknown Dead*

By John Gurdon

To all the fallen, all the nameless
Host of the unremembered slain,
Who noteless fought and perished fameless,
Yet won the cross—the cross of pain,
Greeting I bring and requiem.
May light perpetual shine on them.

I.

In Père Lachaise among the marbles
I marked how human nature tries
To gather grapes of thorns, or garbles
Sorrow with insincerities.
Little I read but hope and praise
Inscribed for those in Père Lachaise.

Yet flesh recoils and spirit falters
Before the secret of the pit.
Brave it who may, no glozing alters
That menace in the gloom of it.
"A child's dread of the darkness!" Well,
Is any fear more terrible?

Auroral Lights of perished passion
Their streamers on the night unfurl;
Or memory's wan moonbeams fashion
'Mid falling tears her arch of pearl;
And still the eternal silence saith:
Death is not otherwise than death.

* Awarded gold medal by the Poets' Club.

—Even destruction's gulf, the lightless
Deep which is called the outer dark,
So void that thought itself is flightless,
So formless that no dream for ark
Floats on oblivion's flood to hive
Some lingering waifs of self alive.

Wherefore, as one who makes libation,
Between the living and the dead
I stand, and give you salutation,
Lords of the Terror. Who have said
Clear words of death? If any hear
My call, make answer! Rise! Appear!

II.

Lo! Sphinx, the ancient wisdom, rises,
She who avers not nor denies.
All things she knows and all despises:
Beyond the streaming galaxies
Her eyes discern the end of things,
And her smile mocks it while she sings:—

"Why for the fruit forbidden
Of knowledge will ye forfeit life's illusion,
Seeing ye yourselves in Maya's veil are woven?
Seek ye the secret hidden?
Hope is a mocker; love, the heart's confusion;
And faith, unreasoning trust in things unproven."

"Thou for whom life seems over,
Whose spirit haunts the wastes of time departed,
Gaze in mine eyes which see the truth and show it.
Behold thy love, O lover,
—Thy long-lost love—grown sleek and sleepy-hearted.
Thou art forgot: be comforted to know it."

"And thou, whose day rejoices
In youth and riches and the love of woman,
Look in mine eyes. Yea, is thy pride abated,
Beholding fate who poises
Her scales which weigh the worth of all things human
Against a little dust, O heart elated?"

"Farewell. Thou canst not stay nor hasten
The flux of the eternal dream;
Nor 'scape the hour when death shall fasten
Upon thee in the kiss supreme,
As on thy lips my lips are pressed
Hard, and my talons in thy breast."

O singer of the hollow places
Where melancholy listless broods
Beside forsaken tasks or paces
Forlorn her echoing solitudes,
If that indeed thou speakest sooth,
Perish with thine ignoble truth!

III.

Then to my mouth remembrance lifted
The cup which Thule's king of old
Was wont to drink from; and there drifted
The music of the Bowl of Gold
Aeolian o'er me, and I knew
That man's inveterate hope was true.

"The silver cord is loosed, and broken
The golden bowl: again the dust
Returns to earth." What ruth unspoken
Wells upward in the words august!
What swell of the heart's bitterness
Heaves underneath their tranquil stress!

O mourning voice, so vast and tender,
Draping thy requiem as a pall
Of hushed magnificence, a splendour
Dim on the common doom of all,
Thine is indeed a gentle word
For death—the loosened silver cord.

But for the dead thou hast no pæan,
No laurel crown, no branch of palm,
Only a threnody lethean
Serene in all-surrendering calm;
And, like a bell that surges toll,
The burden of the Golden Bowl.

Yet rises up the old misgiving:
Is it song's sorcery that transmutes
To gold the pitcher-sherds which, living,
Were earthier of the earth than brutes?
Can this be said of such as they,
Poor cruses of coarse-shapen clay?

Gold? So the phrase is, thus miscalling
That swarming life, obscure and null,
Rolled by the river ever falling
Into an ocean never full.
—Drift and drab ooze to floor the sea
Whose waters are eternity.

IV.

Before me rose austere, impassive,
A cliff-like scarp of limestone grey.
Lofty it stood, a barrier massive
Athwart the cypress-bordered way;
And on the face of it a gloom
Which seemed a cavern or a tomb.

And sculptured shapes of man and maiden
By that dark entrance I beheld.
One knelt in prayer; one, overladen
With the numb miseries of eld,
Submissive bowed. Another bent
Earthward her face. Some crouched or leant

Clinging together as the haven
Of nothingness they gathered nigh.
But under them these words engraven
Spake for the sculptor's imagery:
"They that in darkness sat have seen
Great light." And I descried between

The frowning walls two lovers sleeping
As though the Everlasting Arms
Indeed were under them and keeping
Far from their rest all needs and harms.
And light which seemed no light of day
Dwelt on them like the Shekinah.

The poppy of oblivion covers
The legend and the name of these.
Roses lie strewn by pilgrim-lovers
On Abélard and Héloïse
Summer on summer, year by year,
But never a blossom withers here.

For to the weak, the world-defeated,
Bound on the Ixionian wheel
Of toil, or trodden down and treated
As dross that clogs our age of steel;
Ay, and when dead, like worthless dross
Whose bodies fill the common fosse,

The lives awry, the misbegotten,
Foredoomed to failure from their birth,
With stunted soul and body rotten,
The disinherited of earth,
This monument of limestone grey
Was carven by Bartholomé.

V.

Why tinsel truth to mimic glory,
Making pretence each valiant deed
And death shall live renowned in story
While men by generations bleed?
A list, a number and a name—
Such is the recompense of fame!

Fame! When through death's tremendous portal
The soul emerging fronts the Sea
Of Light, and skims on wings immortal
Its waves of shimmering melody,
What will she care if men below
Extol her earthly name or no?

The periods of the panegyric
May roll sonorous over them
Who had small praise in life; the lyric
May crown, as crowns a diadem
The empty catafalque. But they,
Who died for us, are far away.

Baldur

Old loves, old griefs, the burthen of old songs
That Time, who changes all things, cannot change;
Eternal themes! Ah, who shall dare to join
The sad procession of the kings of song,
Irrevocable names, that sucked the dregs
Of sorrow from the broken honeycomb
Of fellowship; or brush the tears that hang
Bright as ungathered dewdrops on a briar?
Death hallows all; but who will bear with me
To breathe a more heartrending lamentation,
To mourn the memory of a love divided
By life, not death, a friend not dead but changed?

Not dead,—but what is death? Because I hoard
Immortal love, that withers not, but keeps
Full virtue like some rare medicament.
Hoarded for ages in a crystal jar
By wonder-working gnomes; that only waits
The sound of that lost voice, familiar still,
Or sight of face or touch of hand, to bring
Life, like the dawn whose gentle theft unties
The girdle of the petal-folded flowers,
And ravishes their scent before they wake,
My love is like a fountain frozen o'er,
But no returning sun will ever break
The seal of that forbidden spring; no foot
Invade the weed-grown pathway; never kiss
Wake the enchanted beauty of the wood,
And bid the wheels of time revolve again.
Though one should walk the ways of life, and wear
The sweet, remembered name, yet he is not
My playmate; no, the boy whom I have loved
Died long ago; the man is nothing but
His aging sepulchre.

And I, even I,
Know in my deepest heart that I am not
The boy who loved him; and I would I were,
With a most bitter longing which there are
No creeds to comfort. Do we madly feign
The soul to be immortal? Fools! It is not
Even mortal, does not last the little space
The body does, but alters visibly,
And dies a million times 'twixt breath and breath.

Forever and forever and forever
Outgrown and left behind and cast away
The joy that was the blossom of the soul,
And hours that were the butterflies of time.
What though Elysian fields be white with light.
Crowded with glorious forms, and freed from fear
Or spoil or shock, how shall it profit me
Aged with sad hours, to pass to them and meet
Him as he is, removed and fallen and marred?
Hath any God the power to give me back
My boyhood; to undo this growth of years
In which I lose the sense of what I was
And take a different nature? We, self-wrapped,
Conjure with dreams of immortality,
And wit not that the spirit is yet more frail
Than that which holds it; constant is it in nothing
But change; the transmigration of the soul
Goes on from hour to hour, it does not wait
The dissolution of our frame, but is
The law of life, fulfilled in everywise,
And we who fear destruction perish ever.

The soul, that vaulting speck, that busy flame,
That climbing passion-flower, that god, that atom,
It is the seeding-point of forces fed
By earth and air and all we hear and see
And handle. We take life and give it, but
We may not keep it. Sooner might we hope
To clutch the trickling moments in our palm,
Take hold of the eternal pendulum,
And bid the sun of our desire to stand.

Who can take comfort to foresee himself
On unknown stages playing other parts?

It is but treading through a wider maze,
A wearier cycle. Would the butterfly
Feel lesser anguish, as it fell, to know
Some egg in which it wrapped the spark of life
Was ripening in the dark, some day to break
Its natal bonds and walk the earth enrobed
With green and golden fur? Or is it worth
The caterpillar's knowing, as it shrinks
Within the coffin it has built, and dies
Between the straightening walls, that they shall crack
In ruin days or weeks or ages hence,
And issuing from the dust a thing of light,
Not it, shall drink the morning air and wave
Its crimson banners in the sun?

A life
Of endless deaths, an immortality
Of partings, is it worth being gifted with?
Such is the life of nations; they last on
In plant-like continuity, while the men
Who make them fall like leaves and are renewed.
We call ourselves the English people now,
But they who fought till sundown on that hill
In Sussex all those hundred years ago,
And died where they had fought, and never knew
The end of it, what had they happier been
To hear of the great Charter, and the deeds
Of that famed Parliament that drew the sword
Meteor-like forth in shuddering Europe's gaze,
And spilt the blood of kings?

Let no man say
Life may yield other loves: because we loved
At that age when to love is to be lost
In them we love, and not with narrow eyes
To purse up faults and merits. In that age
We loved although we knew not how to love,
Before the buds of sense had learnt to give
Their sweetness up in fiery-fatal blooms
And fruit forbidden. Childhood treads the heights
Whither nor friends nor loves of later days
Can reach, when friends are but acquaintances,
And love's clear stream is muddied o'er with lust.

Forever and forever and forever
Gone are the days and nights of fairyland;
Days that were cups of summer, sacred nights
Too sweet for slumber, hours like tears, on which
The moonbeams peeped between the shuttered blinds
Like children at a feast they cannot share.
(O memories! O to steal from paradise
One more such moment, and then be no more I!)
Those years and loves are gone, not to come back
Till man can turn the wheels of life, and draw
Creation in the thoroughfares of time.

A Minor Prophet

By R. B. Cunninghame Graham

The city sweltered in the August heat. No breath of air lifted the pall of haze that wrapped the streets, the houses, and the dark group of Græco-Roman buildings that stands up like a rock in the dull tide-way of the brick-built tenements that compose the town.

Bells pealed at intervals, summoning the fractioned faithful to their various centres of belief.

When they had ceased and all the congregations were assembled listening to the exhortations of their spiritual advisers, and were employed fumbling inside their purses, as they listened, for the destined "three-penny," that obolus which gives respectability to alms, the silence was complete. Whitey-brown paper bags, dropped over-night, just stirred occasionally as the air swelled their bellies making them seem alive, or as alive as is a jelly-fish left stranded by the tide.

Just as the faithful were assembled in their conventicles adoring the same Deity, all filled with rancour against one another because their methods of interpretation of the Creator's will were different, so did the politicians and the cranks of every sort and sect turn out to push their methods of salvation for mankind. In groups they gathered round the various speakers who discoursed from chairs and carts and points of vantage on the streets.

Above the speakers' heads, banners, held up between two poles, called on the audiences to vote for Liberal or for Tory, for Poor Law Reform, for Social Purity, and for Temperance. Orators, varying from well-dressed and glibly-educated hacks from party centres to red-faced working men, held forth perspiring, and occasionally bedewing those who listened to them with saliva, after an emphatic burst.

It seemed so easy after listening to them, to redress all wrongs, smooth out all wrinkles, and instate each citizen in his own shop where he could sell his sweated goods, with the best advantage to himself and with the greatest modicum of disadvantage to his neighbour, that one was left amazed at the dense apathy of those who did not fall in with the nostrums they had heard. Again, at other platforms, sleek men in broad-cloth, who had never seen a plough except at Agricultural Exhibitions, nor had got on closer terms of friendship with a horse than to be bitten by him as they passed along a street, discoursed upon the land.

"My friends, I say, the land is a fixed quantity, you can't increase it, and without it, it's impossible to live. 'Ow is it, then, that all the land of England is in so few hands?" He paused and mopped his face, and looking round, began again: "Friends—you'll allow me to style you Friends, I know, Friends in the sycred cause of Liberty—the landed aristocracy is our enemy.

"I am not out for confiscation, why should I? I 'ave my 'ome purchased with the fruits of my own hhonest toil. . . ."

Before he could conclude his sentence, a dock labourer, dressed in his Sunday suit of shoddy serge, check shirt, and black silk handkerchief knotted loosely round his neck, looked up, and interjected: "'Ard work, too, mate, that 'ere talkin' in the sun is, that built your 'ome. Beats coal whippin'."

Just for an instant the orator was disconcerted as a laugh ran through the audience; but habit, joined to a natural gift of public speaking, came to his aid, and he rejoined: "Brother working-men, I say ditto to what has fallen from our friend 'ere upon my right. We all are working-men. Some of us, like our friend, work with their 'ands, and others with their 'eds. In either case, the Land is what we 'ave to get at as an article of prime necessity."

Rapidly he sketched a state of things in which a happy population, drawn from the slums, but all instinct with agricultural knowledge, would be settled on the land, each on his little farm, and all devoted to intensive culture in the most modern form. Trees would be all cut down, because they only "'arbour" birds that eat the corn.

Hedges would all be extirpated, for it is known to everyone that mice and rats and animals of every kind live under them, and that they only serve to shelter game. Each man would own a gun and be at liberty to kill a "rabbut" or a "'are," "animals, as we say at college, 'feery naturrey' and placed by Providence upon the land."

These noble sentiments evoked applause, which was a little mitigated by an interjection from a man in gaiters, with a sunburned face, of: "Mister, if everyone is to have a gun and shoot, 'ow long will these 'ere 'ares and rabbuts last?"

A little further on, as thinly covered by his indecently transparent veil of reciprocity as a bare-footed dancer in her Grecian clothes, or a tall ostrich under an inch of sand, and yet as confident as either of them that the essential is concealed, a staunch Protectionist discoursed. With copious notes, to which he turned at intervals, when he appealed to those statistics which can be made in any question to fit every side, he talked of loss of trade. "Friends, we must tax the foreigner. It is this way, you see, our working classes have to compete with other nations, all of which enjoy protective duties. I ask you, is it reasonable that we should let a foreign article come into England?"

Here a dour-looking Scotsman almost spat out the words: "Man, can ye no juist say Great Britain?" and received a bow and "Certainly, my friend, I am not here to wound the sentiments of any man . . . as I was saying, is it reasonable that goods should come to England . . . I mean Great Britain, duty free, and yet articles we manufacture have to pay heavy duties in any foreign port?" "'Ow about bread?" came from a voice upon the outskirts of the crowd.

The speaker reddened, and resumed: "My friend, man doth not live by bread alone; still, I understand the point. A little dooty upon corn, say five shillings in the quarter, would not hurt anyone. We've got to do it. The foreigner is the enemy. I am a Christian; but yet, readin' as I often do the Sermon on the Mount, I never saw we had to lie down in the dust and let ourselves be trampled on.

"Who are to be the inheritors of the earth? Our Lord says, 'Blessed are the meek; they shall inherit it.'"

He paused, and was about to clinch his argument, when a tall Irishman, after expectorating judiciously upon a vacant space between two listeners, shot in: "Shure, then, the English are the meekest of the lot, for they have got the greater part of it."

At other gatherings, Socialists held forth under the red flag. "That banner, comrades, which 'as braved a 'undred fights and the mere sight of which makes the Capitalistic blood-sucker tremble as he feels the time approach when Lybor shall come into its inheritance and the Proletariat shyke off its chaine and join 'ands all the world over, despizin' ryce and creed and all the artificial obstructions that a designin' Priest-'ood and a blood-stained Plutocracy 'ave placed between them to distract their attention from the great cause of Socialism, the great cause that mykes us comrades . . . 'ere, keep off my 'oof, you blighter, with your ammunition wagons. . . ."

Religionists of various sects, all with long hair and dressed in shabby black; the Book either before them on a campaigning lectern or tucked beneath one arm, called upon Christian men to dip their hands into the precious blood and drink from the eternal fountain of pure water that is to be found in the Apocalypse. "Come to 'Im, come to 'Im, I say, my friends, come straight; oh, it is joyful to belong to Jesus. Don't stop for anything, come to 'Im now like little children. . . . Let us sing a 'ymn. You know it, most of you; but brother 'ere," and as he spoke he turned towards a pale-faced youth who held a bag to take the offertory, that sacrament that makes the whole world kin, "will lead it for you."

The acolyte cleared his throat raucously, and to a popular air struck up the refrain of "Let us jump joyful on the road." Flat-breasted girls and pale-faced boys took up the strain, and as it floated through the heavy air, reverberating from the pile of public buildings, gradually all the crowd joined in; shyly at first and then wholeheartedly, and by degrees the vulgar tune and doggerel verses took on an air of power and dignity, and when the hymn was finished, the tears stood in the eyes of grimy-looking women and of red-faced men. Then, with his bag, the pale-faced hymn-leader went through the crowd, reaping a plenteous harvest, all in copper, from those

whose hearts had felt, but for a moment, the full force of sympathy.

Suffragist ladies discussed upon "the Question," shocking their hearers as they touched on prostitution and divorce, and making even stolid policemen, who stood sweating in their thick blue uniforms, turn their eyes upon the ground.

After them, Suffragette girls bounded upon the cart, consigning fathers, brothers, and the whole male section of mankind straight to perdition as they held forth upon the Vote, that all-heal of the female politician, who thinks by means of it to wipe out all those disabilities imposed upon her by an unreasonable Nature and a male Deity, who must have worked alone up in the Empyrean without the humanising influence of a wife.

Little by little the various groups dissolved, the speakers and their friends forcing their "literatoor" upon the passers-by, who generally appeared to look into the air a foot or two above their heads, as they went homewards through the streets.

The Anarchists were the last to leave, a faithful few still congregating around a youth in a red necktie who denounced the other speakers with impartiality, averring that they were "humbugs every one of them," and, for his part, he believed only in dynamite, by means of which he hoped some day to be able to devote "all the blood-suckers to destruction, and thus to bring about the reign of brotherhood."

The little knot of the elect applauded loudly, and the youth, catching the policeman's eye fixed on him, descended hurriedly from off the chair on which he had been perorating, remarking that "it was time to be going home to have a bit of dinner, as he was due to speak at Salford in the evening."

Slowly the square was emptied, the last group or two of people disappearing into the mouths of the incoming streets just as a Roman crowd must have been swallowed up in the vomitoria of an amphitheatre, after a show of gladiators.

Torn newspapers and ends of cigarettes were the sole result of all the rhetoric that had been poured out so liberally upon the assembled thousands in the square.

A MINOR PROPHET

Two or three street boys in their shirt-sleeves, barefooted and bare-headed, their trousers held up by a piece of string, played about listlessly, after the fashion of their kind on Sunday in a manufacturing town, when the life of the streets is dead, and when men's minds are fixed either upon the mysteries of the faith or upon beer, things in which children have but little share.

The usual Sabbath gloom was creeping on the town and dinner-time approaching, when from a corner of the square appeared a man advancing rapidly. He glanced about inquiringly, and for a moment a look of disappointment crossed his face. Mounting the steps that lead up to the smoke-coated Areopagus, he stopped just for an instant, as if to draw his breath and gather his ideas. Decently dressed in shabby black, his trousers frayed a little above the heels of his elastic-sided boots, his soft felt hat that covered long, but scanty hair just touched with grey, he had an air as of a plaster figure set in the middle of a pond, as he stood silhouetted against the background of the buildings, forlorn yet resolute.

The urchins, who had gathered round him, had a look upon their faces as of experienced critics at a play; that look of expectation and sub-conscious irony which characterises all their kind at public spectacles.

Their appearance, although calculated to appal a speaker broken to the platform business, did not influence the man who stood upon the steps. Taking off his battered hat, he placed it and his umbrella carefully upon the ground. A light, as of the interior fire that burned in the frail tenement of flesh so fiercely that it illuminated his whole being, shone in his mild, blue eyes. Clearing his throat, and after running his nervous hands through his thin hair, he pitched his voice well forward, as if the deserted square had been packed full of people prepared to hang upon his words. His voice, a little hoarse and broken during his first sentences, gradually grew clearer, developing a strength quite incommensurate with the source from which it came.

"My friends," he said, causing the boys to grin and waking up the dozing policeman, "I have a doctrine to proclaim. Love only rules the world. The Greek word *caritas* in the New Testament should have been rendered

love. Love suffereth long. Love is not puffed up; love beareth all things. That is what the Apostle really meant to say. Often within this very square I have stood listening to the speeches, and have weighed them in my mind. It is not for me to criticise, only to advocate my own belief . . . Friends."

As his voice had gathered strength, two or three working men, attracted by the sight of a man speaking to the air, surrounded but by the street boys and the nodding policeman on his beat, had gathered round about. Dressed in their Sunday clothes; well washed, and with the look as of restraint that freedom from their accustomed toil often imparts to them on Sunday, they listened stolidly, with that toleration that accepts all doctrines, from that of highest Toryism down to Anarchy, and acts on none of them. The speaker, spurred on by the unwonted sight of listeners, for several draggled women had drawn near, and an ice-cream seller had brought his donkey-cart up to the nearest curb-stone, once more launched into his discourse.

"Friends, when I hear the acerbity of the address of some; when I hear doctrines setting forth the rights, but leaving out the duties of the working class; when I hear men defend the sweater and run down the sweated, calling them thriftless, idle and intemperate, when often they are but unfortunate, I ask myself, what has become of Love? Who sees more clearly than I do myself what the poor have to suffer? Do I not live amongst them and share their difficulties? Who can divine better than one who has imagination—and in that respect I thank my stars I have not been left quite unendowed—what are the difficulties of those high placed by fortune, who yet have got to strive to keep their place?

"Sweaters and sweated, the poor, the rich, men, women, children, all mankind, suffer from want of Love. I am not here to say that natural laws will ever cease to operate, or that there will not be great inequalities, if not of fortune, yet of endowments, to the end of Time. What the Great Power who sent us here intended, only He can tell. One thing He placed within the grasp of everyone, capacity to love. Think, friends, what England might become under the reign of universal love. The murky fumes that now defile the landscape, the manufactories in which our

thousands toil for others, the rivers vile with refuse, the knotted bodies and the faces scarcely human in their abject struggle for their daily bread, would disappear. Bradford and Halifax and Leeds would once again be fair and clean. The ferns would grow once more in Shipley Glen, and in the valleys about Sheffield the scissor-grinders would ply their trade upon streams bright and sparkling, as they were of yore. In Halifax, the Roman road, now black with coal-dust and with mud, would shine as well-defined as it does where now and then it crops out from the ling upon the moors, just as the Romans left it polished by their caligulæ. Why; do you ask me? Because all sordid motives would be gone, and of their superfluity the rich would give to those less blessed by Providence. The poor would grudge no one the gifts of fortune, and thus the need for grinding toil would disappear, as the struggle and the strain for daily bread would fade into the past.

"Picture to yourselves, my friends, an England once more green and merry, with the air fresh and not polluted by the smoke of fœtid towns.

"'Tis pleasant, friends, on a spring morning to hear the village bells calling to church, even although they do not call you to attend. It heals the soul to see the honeysuckle and the eglantine and smell the new-mown hay....

"Then comes a chill when on your vision rises the England of the manufacturing town, dark, dreary, and befouled with smoke. How different it might be in the perpetual May morning I have sketched for you.

"Love suffereth all things, endureth all things, createth all things. . . ."

He paused, and, looking round, saw he was all alone. The boys had stolen away, and the last workman's sturdy back could be just seen as it was vanishing towards the public-house.

The speaker sighed, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead with a soiled handkerchief.

Then, picking up his hat and his umbrella, a far-off look came into his blue eyes as he walked homewards almost jauntily, conscious that the inner fire had got the better of the fleshly tenement, and that his work was done.

My Childhood (ii)

By Maxim Gorki

Translated from the Russian by Mrs. G. M. Foakes.

III.

I was lying in a wide bed, with a thick blanket folded four times around me, listening to grandmother, who was saying her prayers. She was on her knees; and pressing one hand against her breast, she reverently crossed herself from time to time with the other. Out in the yard a hard frost reigned; a greenish moonlight peeped through the ice patterns on the window-panes, falling flatteringly on her kindly face and large nose, and kindling a phosphorescent light in her dark eyes. Her silky, luxuriant tresses were lit up as if by a furnace; her dark dress rustled, falling in ripples from her shoulders and spreading about her on the floor.

When she had finished her prayers grandmother undressed in silence, carefully folding up her clothes and placing them on the trunk in the corner. Then she came to bed. I pretended to be fast asleep.

"You are not asleep, you rogue, you are only making believe," she said softly. "Come, my duck, let's have some bedclothes!"

Foreseeing what would happen, I could not repress a smile, upon seeing which she cried: "So this is how you trick your old grandmother?" And taking hold of the blanket she drew it towards her with so much force and skill that I bounced up in the air, and turning over and over fell back with a squash into the soft feather bed, while she said with a chuckle: "What is it, little Hop o' my Thumb? Have you been bitten by a mosquito?"

But sometimes she prayed for such a long time that I really did fall asleep, and did not hear her come to bed.

The longer prayers were generally the conclusion of

a day of trouble, or a day of quarrelling and fighting; and it was very interesting to listen to them. Grandmother gave to God a circumstantial account of all that had happened in the house. Bowed down, looking like a great mound, she knelt, at first whispering rapidly and indistinctly, then hoarsely muttering:

"O Lord, Thou knowest that all of us wish to do better. Michael, the elder, ought to have been set up in the town—it will do him harm to be on the river; and the other is a new neighbourhood and not overdone. I don't know what will come of it all! There's Father now. Jaakov is his favourite. Can it be right to love one child more than the others? He is an obstinate old man; do Thou, O Lord, teach him!"

Gazing at the dark-featured icon with her large, brilliant eyes, she thus counselled God:

"Send him a good dream, O Lord, to make him understand how he ought to treat his children!"

After prostrating herself and striking her broad forehead on the floor, she again straightened herself, and said coaxingly:

"And send Varvara some happiness! How has she displeased Thee? Is she more sinful than the others? Why should a healthy young woman be so afflicted? And remember Gregory, O Lord! His eyes are getting worse and worse. If he goes blind he will be sent adrift. That will be terrible! He has used up all his strength for grandfather, but do you think it likely that grandfather will help him? O Lord! Lord!"

She remained silent for a long time, with her head bowed meekly, and her hands hanging by her sides, as still as if she had fallen asleep, or had been suddenly frozen.

"What else is there?" she asked herself aloud, wrinkling her brows.

"O Lord, save all the faithful! Pardon me—accursed fool as I am!—Thou knowest that I do not sin out of malice but out of stupidity." And drawing a deep breath she would say lovingly and contentedly: "Son of God, Thou knowest all! Father, Thou seest all things."

I was very fond of grandmother's God Who seemed so near to her, and I often said:

"Tell me something about God."

She used to speak about Him in a peculiar manner—very quietly, strangely drawing out her words, closing her eyes; and she made a point of always sitting down and arranging her head-handkerchief very deliberately before she began.

"God's seat is on the hills, amidst the meadows of Paradise; it is an altar of sapphires under silver linden trees which flower all the year round, for in Paradise there is no winter, nor even autumn, and the flowers never wither, for joy is the divine favour. And round about God many angels fly like flakes of snow; and it may be even that bees hum there, and white doves fly between Heaven and earth, telling God all about us and everybody. And here on earth you and I and grandfather each has been given an angel. God treats us all equally. For instance, your angel will go and tell God: 'Lexei put his tongue out at grandfather.' And God says: 'All right, let the old man whip him.' And so it is with all of us; God gives to all what they deserve—to some grief, to others joy. And so all is right that He does, and the angels rejoice, and spread their wings and sing to Him without ceasing: 'Glory be unto Thee, O God; Glory be unto Thee.' And He just smiles on them, and it is enough for them—and more." And she would smile herself, shaking her head from side to side.

"Have you seen that?"

"No, I have not seen it, but I know."

When she spoke about God, or Heaven, or the angels, she seemed to shrink in size; her face grew younger, and her liquid eyes emitted a curious warm radiance. I used to take her heavy, satiny plait in my hands, and wind it round my neck as I sat quite still and listened to the endless but never tedious story.

"It is not given to men to see God—their sight is dim! Only the saints may look upon Him face to face. But I have seen angels myself; they reveal themselves sometimes to souls in a state of grace. I was standing in church at an early Mass, and I saw two moving about the altar like clouds. One could see everything, through them, growing brighter and brighter, and their gossamer-like wings touched the floor. They moved about the altar, helping

old Father Elia, and supporting his elbows as he raised his feeble hands in prayer. He was very old, and being almost blind, stumbled frequently; but that day he got through the Mass quickly, and was finished early. When I saw them I nearly died of joy. My heart seemed as if it would burst; my tears ran down. Ah, how beautiful it was! Oh Lenka, dear heart, where God is—whether in Heaven or earth—all goes well."

"But you don't mean to say that everything goes well here—in our house?"

Making the sign of the cross grandmother answered:

"Our Lady be praised—everything goes well."

This irritated me. I could not agree that things were going well in our household. From my point of view they were becoming more and more intolerable.

One day, as I passed the door of Uncle Michael's room, I saw Aunt Natalia, not fully dressed, with her hands folded on her breast, pacing up and down like a creature distraught, and moaning, not loudly, but in a tone of agony:

"My God, take me under Thy protection! Remove me from here!"

I could sympathise with her prayer as well as I could understand Gregory when he growled:

"As soon as I am quite blind they will turn me out to beg; it will be better than this, anyhow."

And I wished that he would make haste and go blind, for I meant to seize the opportunity to go away with him so that we could start begging together. I had already mentioned the matter to Gregory, and he had replied, smiling in his beard:

"That's right! We will go together. But I shall show myself in the town. There's a grandson of Vassili Kashmirin's there—his daughter's son; he may give me something to do."

More than once I noticed a blue swelling under the sunken eyes of Aunt Natalia; and sometimes a swollen lip was thrown into relief by her yellow face.

"Does Uncle Michael beat her then?" I asked grandmother. And she answered with a sigh:

"Yes, he beats her, but not very hard—the devil! Grandfather does not object so long as he does it at night. He is ill-natured, and she—she is like a jelly!"

"But he does not beat her as much as he used to," she continued in a more cheerful tone. "He just gives her a blow on the mouth, or boxes her ears, or drags her about by the hair for a minute or so; but at one time he used to torture her for hours together. Grandfather beat me one Easter Day from dinner-time till bed-time. He kept on; he just stopped to get his breath sometimes, and then started again. And he used a strap too!"

"But why did he do it?"

"I forget now. Another time he knocked me about till I was nearly dead, and then kept me without food for five hours. I was hardly alive when he had finished with me."

I was thunderstruck. Grandmother was twice as big as grandfather, and it was incredible that he should be able to get the better of her like this.

"Is he stronger than you then?" I asked.

"Not stronger, but older. Besides, he is my husband, he has to answer for me to God; but my duty is to suffer patiently."

It was an interesting and pleasing sight to see her dusting the icon and cleaning its ornamentation; it was richly adorned with pearls, silver, and coloured gems in the crown, and as she took it gently in her hands she gazed at it with a smile, and said in a tone of feeling:

"See what a sweet face it is!" And crossing herself and kissing it, she went on: "Dusty art thou, and begrimed, Mother, Help of Christians, Joy of the Elect! Look, Lenia, darling, how small the writing is, and what tiny characters they are; and yet it is all quite distinct. It is called 'The Twelve Holy-Days,' and in the middle you see the great Mother of God by predestination immaculate; and here is written: 'Mourn not for me, Mother, because I am about to be laid in the grave.'"

Sometimes it seemed to me as if she played with the icon as earnestly and seriously as my Cousin Ekaterina with her doll. She often saw devils, sometimes several together, sometimes one alone.

"One clear moonlight night, during the great Fast, I was passing the Rudolphovs' house, and looking up I saw, on the roof, a devil sitting close to the chimney! He was all black, and he was holding his horned head over the top

of the chimney and sniffing vigorously. There he sat sniffing and grunting, the great, unwieldy creature, with his tail on the roof, scraping with his feet all the time. I made the sign of the Cross at him and said: 'Christ is risen from the dead, and His enemies are scattered.' At that he gave a low howl and slipped head over heels from the roof to the yard—so *he* was scattered! They must have been cooking meat at the Rudolphovs' that day, and he was enjoying the smell of it."

I laughed at her picture of the devil flying head over heels off the roof, and she laughed too as she said:

"They are as fond of playing tricks as children. One day I was doing the washing in the washhouse and it was getting late, when suddenly the door of the little room burst open and in rushed lots of little red, green, and black creatures like cockroaches, and all sizes, and spread themselves all over the place. I flew towards the door, but I could not get past; there I was unable to move hand or foot amongst a crowd of devils! They filled the whole place so that I could not turn round. They crept about my feet, plucked at my dress, and crowded round me so that I had not even room to cross myself. Shaggy, and soft, and warm, somewhat resembling cats, though they walked on their hind legs, they went round and round me, peering into everything, showing their teeth like mice, blinking their small green eyes, almost piercing me with their horns, and sticking out their little tails—they were like pigs' tails. Oh, my dear! I seemed to be going out of my mind. And didn't they push me about too! The candle nearly went out, the water in the copper became luke-warm, the washing was all thrown about the floor. Ah! your very breath was trouble and sorrow."

Closing my eyes, I could visualise the threshold of the little chamber with its grey cobble-stones, and the unclean stream of shaggy creatures of diverse colours which gradually filled the washhouse. I could see them blowing out the candle and thrusting out their impudent pink tongues. It was a picture both comical and terrifying.

Grandmother was silent a minute, shaking her head, before she burst out again:

"And I saw some fiends, too, one wintry night, when it was snowing. I was coming across the Dinkov Cause-

way—the place where, if you remember, your Uncle Michael and your Uncle Jaakov tried to drown your father in an ice-hole—and I was just going to take the lower path, when there came the sounds of hissing and hooting, and I looked up and saw a team of three raven-black horses tearing towards me. On the coachman's place stood a great fat devil, in a red nightcap, with protruding teeth. He was holding the reins, made of forged iron chains, with outstretched arms, and as there was no way round, the horses flew right over the pond, and were hidden by a cloud of snow. All those sitting in the sledge behind were devils too; there they sat, hissing and screaming and waving their nightcaps. In all, seven troikas like this tore by, as if they had been fire-engines, all with black horses, and all carrying a load of thoroughbred devils. They pay visits to each other, you know, and drive about in the night to their different festivities. I expect that was a devil's wedding that I saw."

One had to believe grandmother, because she spoke so simply and convincingly.

But the best of all her stories was the one which told how Our Lady went about the suffering earth, and how she commanded the woman-brigand, or the "Amazon-chief" Engalichev, not to kill or rob Russian people. And after that came the stories about Blessed Alexei; about Ivan the Warrior, and Vassili the Wise; of the Priest Kozlya, and the beloved child of God; and the terrible stories of Martha Posadnitz, of Baba Ustye the robber chief, of Mary the sinner of Egypt, and of sorrowing mothers of robber sons. The fairy-tales, and stories of old times, and the poems which she knew were without number.

She feared no one—neither grandfather, nor devils, nor any of the powers of evil; but she was terribly afraid of black cockroaches, and could feel their presence when they were a long way from her. Sometimes she would wake me in the night whispering:

"Oleysha, dear, there is a cockroach crawling about. Do get rid of it, for goodness' sake."

Half-asleep, I would light the candle and creep about on the floor seeking the enemy—a quest in which I did not always succeed at once.

"No, there's not a sign of one," I would say; but lying

quite still with her head muffled up in the bedclothes, she would entreat me in a faint voice:

"Oh, yes, there is one there! Do look again, *please*. I am sure there is one about somewhere."

And she was never mistaken. Sooner or later I found the cockroach, at some distance from the bed; and throwing the blanket off her she would breathe a sigh of relief and smile as she said:

"Have you killed it? Thank God! Thank you."

If I did not succeed in discovering the insect, she could not go to sleep again, and I could feel how she trembled in the silence of the night; and I heard her whisper breathlessly:

"It is by the door. Now it has crawled under the trunk."

"Why are you so frightened of cockroaches?"

"I don't know myself," she would answer, reasonably enough. "It is the way the horrid black things crawl about. God has given a meaning to all other vermin: woodlice show that the house is damp; bugs mean that the walls are dirty; lice foretell an illness, as everyone knows; but these creatures!—who knows what powers they possess, or what they live on?"

. . . . . .

One day when she was on her knees, conversing earnestly with God, grandfather, throwing open the door, shouted hoarsely:

"Well, Mother, God has afflicted us again. We are on fire."

"What are you talking about?" cried grandmother, jumping up from the floor; and they both rushed into the large parlour, making a great noise with their feet. "Eugenia, take down the icons. Natalia, dress the baby."

Grandmother gave her orders in a stern voice of authority, but all grandfather did was to mutter: "Ug—h!"

I ran into the kitchen. The window looking on to the yard shone like gold, and yellow patches of light appeared on the floor, and Uncle Jaakov, who was dressing, trod on them with his bare feet, and jumped about as if they had burned him, shrieking:

"This is Mischka's doing. He started the fire, and then went out."

"Peace, cur!" said grandmother, pushing him towards the door so roughly that he nearly fell.

Through the frost on the window-panes the burning roof of the workshop was visible, with the curling flames pouring out from its open door. It was a still night, and the colour of the flames was not spoiled by any admixture of smoke; while just above them hovered a dark cloud which, however, did not hide from our sight the silver stream of the Mlethchna Road. The snow glittered with a livid brilliance, and the walls of the house tottered and shook from side to side, as if about to hurl themselves into that burning corner of the yard where the flames disported themselves so gaily as they poured through the broad red cracks in the walls of the workshop, dragging crooked, red-hot nails out with them. Gold and red ribbons wound themselves about the dark beams of the roof, and soon enveloped it entirely; but the slender chimney-pot stood up straight in the midst of it all, belching forth clouds of smoke. A gentle crackling sound like the rustle of silk beat against our windows, and all the time the flames were spreading till the workshop, adorned by them, as it were, looked like the iconostasis in church, and became more and more attractive to me.

Throwing a heavy fur coat over my head and thrusting my feet into the first boots that came handy, I ran out to the porch and stood on the steps, stupefied and blinded by the brilliant play of light, dazed by the yells of my grandfather, and uncles, and Gregory, and alarmed by grandmother's behaviour, for she had wrapped an empty sack round her head, enveloped her body in a horse-cloth, and was running straight into the flames. She disappeared, crying: "The vitriol, you fools! It will explode!"

"Keep her back, Gregory!" roared grandfather. "Aie! she's done for——!"

But grandmother reappeared at this moment, blackened with smoke, half-fainting, bent almost double over the bottle of vitriolic oil which she was carrying in her stretched-out hands.

"Father, get the horse out!" she cried hoarsely, coughing and spluttering, "and take this thing off my shoulders. Can't you see it is on fire?"

Gregory dragged the smouldering horse-cloth from her

shoulders, and then, working hard enough for two men, went on shovelling large lumps of snow into the door of the workshop. My uncle jumped about him with an axe in his hands, while grandfather ran round grandmother, throwing snow over her; then she put the bottle into a snowdrift, and ran to the gate, where there were a great many people gathered together. After greeting them, she said:

"Save the warehouse, neighbours! If the fire fastens upon the warehouse and the hay-loft, we shall be burnt out; and it will spread to your premises. Go and pull off the roof and drag the hay into the garden! Gregory, why don't you throw some of the snow on top, instead of throwing it all on the ground? Now, Jaakov, don't dawdle about! Give some axes and spades to these good folk. Dear neighbours, behave like true friends, and may God reward you!"

She was quite as interesting to me as the fire. Illuminated by those flames which had so nearly devoured her, she rushed about the yard—a black figure, giving assistance at all points, managing the whole thing, and letting nothing escape her attention.

Sharapa ran into the yard, rearing and nearly throwing grandfather down. The light fell on his large eyes which shone expressively; he breathed heavily as his forefeet pawed the air, and grandfather let the reins fall, and jumping aside called out: "Catch hold of him, Mother!"

She threw herself almost under the feet of the rearing horse, and stood in front of him, with outstretched arms in the form of a cross; the animal neighed pitifully and let himself be drawn towards her, swerving aside at the flames.

"Now, you are not frightened," said grandmother in a low voice, as she patted his neck and grasped the reins. "Do you think I would leave you when you are in such a state? Oh, you silly little mouse!"

And the little "mouse," who was twice as large as herself, submissively went to the gate with her, snuffling, and gazing at her red face. Nyanya Eugenia had brought some muffled-up youngsters, who were bellowing in smothered tones, from the house.

"Vassili Vassilitch," she cried, "we can't find Alexei anywhere!"

"Go away! Go away!" answered grandfather, waving his hands, and I hid myself under the stairs so that Nyanya should not take me away.

The roof of the workshop had fallen in by this time, and the stanchions, smoking, and glittering like golden coal, stood out against the sky. With a howl and a crash a green, blue, and red tornado burst inside the building, and the flames threw themselves with a new energy on the yard and on the people who were gathered round and throwing spadefuls of snow on the huge bonfire.

The heat caused the vats to boil furiously; a thick cloud of steam and smoke arose, and a strange odour, which caused one's eyes to water, floated into the yard. I crept out from beneath the stairs and got under grandmother's feet.

"Get away!" she shrieked. "You will get trampled on. Get away!"

At this moment a man on horseback, with a copper helmet, burst into the yard. His roan-coloured horse was covered with froth, and he raised a whip high above his head and shouted threateningly:

"Make way there!"

Bells rang out hurriedly and gaily; it was just as beautiful as a festival day.

Grandmother pushed me back towards the steps.

"What did I tell you? Go away!"

I could not disobey her at such a time, so I went back to the kitchen and glued myself once more to the window; but I could not see the fire through that dense mass of people—I could see nothing but the gleam of copper helmets amongst the winter caps of fur.

In a short time the fire was got under, totally extinguished, and the building submerged. The police drove the onlookers away, and grandmother came into the kitchen.

"Who is this? Oh, it is you! Why aren't you in bed? Frightened, eh? There's nothing to be frightened about; it is all over now."

She sat beside me in silence, shaking a little. The return of the quiet night with its darkness was a relief. Presently grandfather came in, and standing in the doorway said:

"Mother?"

"Yes?"

"Were you burned?"

"A little—nothing to speak of."

He lit a brimstone match, which lit up his soot-begrimed face, looked for and found the candle on the table, and then came over swiftly and sat beside grandmother.

"The best thing we can do is to wash ourselves," she said, for she was covered with soot too, and smelt of acrid smoke.

"Sometimes," said grandfather, drawing a deep breath, "God is pleased to endue you with great good-sense." And stroking her shoulder he added with a grin: "Only sometimes, you know, just for an hour or so; but there it is all the same."

Grandmother smiled too, and began to say something, but grandfather stopped her, frowning:

"We shall have to get rid of Gregory. All this trouble has been caused by his neglect. His working days are over. He is worn out. That fool Jaaschka is sitting on the stairs crying; you had better go to him."

She stood up and went out, holding her hand up to her face and blowing on her fingers; and grandfather, without looking at me, asked softly:

"You saw it all from the beginning of the fire, didn't you? Then you saw how grandmother behaved, didn't you? And that is an old woman mind you!—crushed and breaking-up—and yet you see——! U—ugh, *you!*"

After a long silence, during which he sat huddled up, he rose and snuffed the candle, as he asked me:

"Were you frightened?"

"No."

"Quite right! There was nothing to be frightened about."

Irritably dragging his shirt from his shoulder, he went to the washstand in the corner, and I could hear him in the darkness stamping his feet as he exclaimed:

"A fire is a silly business. The person who causes a fire ought to be beaten in the market-place. He must be either a fool or a thief. If that was done there would be

no more fires. Go away now, and go to bed! What are you sitting there for?"

I did as he told me, but sleep was denied to me that night. I had no sooner laid myself down when an unearthly howl greeted me, which seemed to come from the bed. I rushed back to the kitchen, in the middle of which stood grandfather, shirtless, holding a candle which flickered violently as he stamped his feet on the floor, crying:

"Mother! Jaakov! What is that?"

I jumped on the stove and hid myself in a corner, and the household was once more in a state of wild commotion; a heartrending howl beat against the ceiling and walls, increasing in sound every moment.

It was all just the same as it had been during the fire. Grandfather and uncle ran about aimlessly; grandmother shouted as she drove them away from one place to another; Gregory made a great noise as he thrust logs into the stove and filled the iron kettle with water. He went about the kitchen bobbing his head just like an Astrakhan camel.

"Heat the stove first," said grandmother in a tone of authority.

He rushed to do her bidding, and fell over my legs.

"Who is there?" he cried, greatly flustered. "Phew! How you frightened me! You are always where you ought not to be."

"What has happened?"

"Aunt Natalia has had a little baby born to her," he replied calmly, jumping down to the floor.

I remembered that my mother had not screamed like that when her little baby was born.

Having placed the kettle over the fire, Gregory climbed up to me on the stove, and drawing a long pipe from his pocket, showed it to me.

"I am taking to a pipe for the good of my eyes," he explained. "Grandmother advised me to take snuff, but I think smoking will do me more good."

He sat on the edge of the stove with his legs crossed, looking down at the feeble light of the candle; his ears and cheeks were smothered in soot, one side of his shirt was torn, and I could see his ribs—as broad as the ribs of a cask. One of his eyeglasses was broken; almost half of

the glass had come out of the frame, and from the empty space peered a red, moist eye, which had the appearance of a wound.

Filling his pipe with coarse-cut tobacco, he listened to the groans of the travailling woman, and murmured disjointedly, like a drunken man:

"That grandmother of yours has burned herself so badly that I am sure I don't know how she can attend to the poor creature. Just hear how your aunt is groaning. You know, they forgot all about her. She was taken bad when the fire first broke out. It was fright that did it. You see what pain it costs to bring children into the world, and yet women are thought nothing of! But, mark my words—women ought to be thought a lot of, for they are the mothers——"

Here I dozed, and was awakened by a tumult: a banging of doors, and the drunken cries of Uncle Michael; these strange words floated to my ears:

"The royal doors must be opened——!"

"Give her holy oil with rum, half a glass of oil, half a glass of rum, and a tablespoonful of soot——"

Then Uncle Michael kept asking like a tiresome child:

"Let me have a look at her!"

He sat on the floor with his legs sprawling, and kept spitting straight in front of him, and banging his hands on the floor.

I began to find the stove unbearably hot, so I slid down, but when I got on a level with uncle he seized and held me by the legs, and I fell on the back of my head.

"Fool!" I exclaimed.

He jumped to his feet, grabbed me again, and roared:

"I'll smash you against the stove——"

I escaped to a corner of the best parlour, under the image, and ran against grandfather's knees; he put me aside, and gazing upwards, went on in a low voice:

"There is no excuse for any of us——"

The image-lamp burned brightly over his head, a candle stood on the table in the middle of the room, and the light of a foggy winter's morning was already peeping in at the window. Presently he bent towards me, and asked:

"What's the matter with you?"

Everything was the matter with me—my head was clammy, my body sorely weary; but I did not like to say so because everything about me was so strange. Almost all the chairs in the room were occupied by strangers; there were a priest in a lilac-coloured robe, a grey-headed old man with glasses, in a military uniform, and many other people who all sat quite still like wooden figures, or figures frozen, as it were, in expectation of something, and listened to the sound of water splashing somewhere near. By the door stood Uncle Jaakov, very upright, with his hands behind his back. "Here!" said grandfather to him, "take this child to bed."

My uncle beckoned me to follow him, and led the way on tiptoe to the door of grandmother's room, and when I had got into bed he whispered:

"Your Aunt Natalia is dead."

I was not surprised to hear it. She had not been visible for a long time, either in the kitchen or at meals.

"Where is grandmother?" I asked.

"Down there," he replied, waving his hand, and went out of the room, still going softly on his bare feet.

I lay in bed and looked about me. I seemed to see hairy, grey, sightless faces pressed against the window-pane, and though I knew quite well that those were grandmother's clothes hanging over the box in the corner, I imagined that some living creature was hiding there and waiting. I put my head under the pillow, leaving one eye uncovered so that I could look at the door, and wished that I dared jump out of bed and run out of the room. It was very hot, and there was a heavy, stifling odour which reminded me of the night when Tsiganok died, and that rivulet of blood ran along the floor.

Something in my head or my heart seemed to be swelling; everything that I had seen in that house seemed to stretch before my mind's eye, like a train of winter sledges in the street, and to rise up and crush me.

The door opened very slowly, and grandmother crept into the room, and closing the door with her shoulder, came slowly forward; and holding out her hand to the blue light of the image-lamp, wailed softly, pitifully as a child:

"Oh, my poor little hand! My poor hand hurts me so!"

IV

BEFORE long another nightmare began. One evening when we had finished tea and grandfather and I sat over the Psalter, while grandmother was washing up the cups and saucers, Uncle Jaakov burst into the room, as dishevelled as ever, and bearing a strange resemblance to one of the household brooms. Without greeting us, he tossed his cap into a corner and began speaking rapidly, with excited gestures.

"Mischka is kicking up an utterly uncalled-for row. He had dinner with me, drank too much, and began to show unmistakable signs of being out of his mind; he broke up the crockery, tore up an order which had just been completed—it was a woollen dress—broke the windows, insulted me and Gregory, and now he is coming here, threatening you. He keeps shouting, 'I'll pull father's beard for him! I'll kill him!' so you had better look out."

Grandfather rose slowly to his feet, resting his hands on the table. He was frowning heavily, and his face seemed to dry up, growing narrow and cruel, like a hatchet.

"Do you hear that, Mother?" he yelled. "What do you think of it, eh? Our own son coming to kill his father! But it is quite time; it is quite time, my children."

He went up the room, straightening his shoulders, to the door, sharply snapped the heavy iron hook, which fastened it, into its ring, and turned again to Uncle Jaakov saying:

"This is all because you want to get hold of Varvara's dowry. That's what it is!"

And he laughed derisively in the face of my uncle, who asked in an offended tone:

"What should *I* want with it?"

"You? I know you!"

Grandmother was silent as she hastily put the cups and saucers away in the cupboard.

"Well?" cried grandfather, laughing bitterly. "Very good! Thank you, my son. Mother, give this fox a poker, or an iron if you like. Now, Jaakov Vassilev, when your brother breaks in, kill him before my eyes!"

My uncle thrust his hands into his pockets and retired into a corner.

"Of course, if you won't believe me——"

"Believe you?" cried grandfather, stamping his feet. "No! I'll believe an animal—a dog, a hedgehog even—but I have no faith in you. I know you too well. You made him drunk, and then gave him his instructions. Very well! What are you waiting for? Kill me now—him or me, you can take your choice!"

Grandmother whispered to me softly: "Run upstairs and look out of the window, and when you see Uncle Michael coming along the street, hurry back and tell us. Run along now! Make haste!"

A little frightened by the threatened invasion of my turbulent uncles, but proud of the confidence placed in me, I leaned out of the window which looked out upon the broad road, now thickly coated with dust through which the lumpy, rough cobble-stones were just visible. The street stretched a long way to the left, and crossing the causeway continued to Ostrojni Square, where, firmly planted on the clay soil, stood a grey building with a tower at each of its four corners—the old prison, about which there was a suggestion of melancholy beauty. On the right, about three houses away, there was an opening in Syenia Square, which was built round the yellow domicile of the prison officials, and on the leaden-coloured fire-tower, on the look-out gallery of the tower, revolved the figures of the watchmen, looking like dogs on chains. The whole square was cut off from the causeway—at one end stood a green thicket, and, more to the right, lay the stagnant Dinka Pond, into which, so grandmother used to tell the story, my uncles had thrown my father one winter, with the intention of drowning him. Almost opposite our windows was a lane of small houses of various colours which led to the dumpy, squat church of the "Three Apostles." If you looked straight at it the roof appeared exactly like a boat turned upside down on the green waves of the garden. Defaced by the snowstorms of a long winter, washed by the continuous rains of autumn, the discoloured houses in our street were powdered with dust. They seemed to look at each other with half-closed eyes, like beggars in the church porch, and, like me, they seemed to be waiting for someone, and their open windows had an air of suspicion.

There were a few people moving about the street in a leisurely manner, like thoughtful cockroaches on a warm hearth; a suffocating heat rose up to me, and the detestable odour of pie and carrots and onions cooking forced itself upon me—a smell which always made me feel melancholy. I was very miserable—ridiculously, intolerably miserable! My breast felt as if it were full of warm lead which pressed from within and exuded through my ribs. I seemed to feel myself inflating like a bladder, and yet there I was, compressed into that tiny room, under a coffin-shaped ceiling.

There was Uncle Michael—peeping from the lane round the corner of the grey houses. He tried to pull his cap down over his ears, but they stuck out all the same. He was wearing a brown pea-jacket and high boots which were very dusty; one hand was in the pocket of his check trousers, and with the other he tugged at his beard. I could not see his face, but he stood almost as if he were prepared to dart across the road and seize grandfather's house in his rough, black hands. I ought to have run downstairs to say that he had come, but I could not tear myself away from the window, and I waited till I saw my uncle kick the dust about over his grey boots just as if he were afraid, and then cross the road. I heard the door of the wineshop creak, and its glass panels rattle as he opened it, before I ran downstairs and knocked at grandfather's door.

"Who is it?" he asked gruffly, making no attempt to let me in. "Oh, it's you! Well, what is it?"

"He has gone into the wineshop!"

"All right! Run along!"

"But I am frightened up there."

"I can't help that."

Again I stationed myself at the window. It was getting dark. The dust lay more thickly on the road, and looked almost black; yellow patches of light oozed out from the adjacent windows, and from the house opposite came strains of music played on several stringed instruments—melancholy but pleasing. There was singing in the tavern, too; when the door opened the sound of a feeble, broken voice floated out into the street. I recognised it as belonging to the beggar cripple, Nikitoushka—a bearded ancient,

with one glass eye and the other always tightly closed. When the door banged it sounded as if his song had been cut off with an axe.

Grandmother used to envy this beggar-man. After listening to his songs she used to say, with a sigh:

"There's talent for you! What a lot of poetry he knows by heart. It's a gift—that's what it is."

Sometimes she invited him into the yard, where he sat on the steps and sang, or told stories, while grandmother sat beside him and listened, with such exclamations as:

"Go on. Do you mean to tell me that Our Lady was ever at Ryazin?"

To which he would reply in a low voice which carried conviction with it:

"She went everywhere—through every province."

An elusive, dreamy lassitude seemed to float up to me from the street, and place its oppressive weight upon my heart and my eyes. I wished that grandmother would come to me—or even grandfather. I wondered what kind of a man my father had been that grandfather and my uncles disliked him so, while grandmother and Gregory and Nyanya Eugenia spoke so well of him. And where was my mother? I thought of her more and more every day, making her the centre of all the fairy-tales and old legends related to me by grandmother. The fact that she did not choose to live with her own family increased my respect for her. I imagined her living at an inn on a highroad, with robbers who waylaid rich travellers, and shared the spoils with beggars. Or it might be that she was living in a forest—in a cave, of course—with good robbers, keeping house for them, and taking care of their stolen gold. Or, again, she might be wandering about the earth reckoning up its treasures, as the robber-chieftainess Engalitchev went with Our Lady, who would say to her, as she said to the robber-chieftainess:

> "Do not steal, O grasping slave,
> The gold and silver from every cave;
> Nor rob the earth of all its treasure
> For thy greedy body's pleasure."

To which my mother would answer in the words of the robber-chieftainess:

" Pardon, Lady, Virgin Blest!
To my sinful soul give rest;
Not for myself the gold I take,
I do it for my young son's sake."

And Our Lady, good-natured, like grandmother, would pardon her, and say:

" Maroushka, Maroushka, of Tartar blood,
For you, luckless one, 'neath the Cross I stood;
Continue your journey and bear your load,
And scatter your tears o'er the toilsome road.
But with Russian people please do not meddle;
Waylay the Mongol in the woods
Or rob the Kalmuck of his goods."

Thinking of this story, I lived in it, as if it had been a dream. I was awakened by a trampling, a tumult, and howls from below—in the sheds and in the yard. I looked out of the window and saw grandfather, Uncle Jaakov, and a man employed by the tavern-keeper—the funny-looking bar-tender, Melyan—pushing Uncle Michael through the wicket-gate into the street. He hit out, but they struck him on the arms, the back, and the neck with their hands, and then kicked him. In the end he went flying headlong through the gate, and landed in the dusty road. The gate banged, the latch and the bolt rattled; all that remained of the fray was a much ill-used cap lying in the gateway, and all was quiet.

After lying still for a time, my uncle dragged himself to his feet, all torn and dishevelled, and picking up one of the cobble-stones, hurled it at the gate with such a resounding clangour as might have been caused by a blow on the bottom of a cask. Shadowy people crept out of the tavern, shouting, cursing, gesticulating violently; heads were thrust out of the windows of the houses round; the street was alive with people, laughing and talking loudly. It was all like a story which aroused one's curiosity, but was at the same time unpleasant and full of horrors. Suddenly the whole thing was obliterated; the voices died away, and everyone disappeared from my sight.

. . . . . .

On a box by the door sat grandmother, doubled up, motionless, hardly breathing. I went and stood close to her and stroked her warm, soft, wet cheeks, but she did not seem to feel my touch, as she murmured over and over again hoarsely:

"O God! have You no compassion left for me and my children? Lord! have mercy——!"

It seems that grandfather had only lived in that house in Polevoi Street for a year—from one spring to another—yet during that time it had acquired an unpleasant notoriety. Almost every Sunday boys ran about our door, chanting gleefully:

"There's another row going on at the Kashmirins!"

Uncle Michael generally put in an appearance in the evening and held the house in a state of siege all night, putting its occupants into a frenzy of fear; sometimes he was accompanied by two or three assistants—repulsive-looking loafers of the lowest class. They used to make their way unseen from the causeway to the garden, and, once there, they indulged their drunken whims to the top of their bent, stripping the raspberry and currant bushes, and sometimes making a raid on the washhouse and breaking everything in it which could be broken—washing-stools, benches, kettles—smashing the stove, tearing up the flooring, and pulling down the framework of the door.

Grandfather, grim and mute, stood at the window listening to the noise made by these destroyers of his property; while grandmother, whose form could not be descried in the darkness, ran about the yard, crying in a voice of entreaty:

"Mischka! what are you thinking of? Mischka!"

For answer, a torrent of abuse in Russian, hideous as the ravings of a madman, was hurled at her from the garden by the brute, who was obviously ignorant of the meaning, and insensible to the effect of the words which he vomited forth.

I knew that I must not run after grandmother at such a time, and I was afraid to be alone, so I went down to grandfather's room; but directly he saw me, he cried:

"Get out! Curse you!"

I ran up to the garret and looked out on the yard and garden from the dormer-window, trying to keep grandmother in sight. I was afraid that they would kill her, and I screamed, and called out to her, but she did not come to me; only my drunken uncle, hearing my voice, abused my mother in furious and obscene language.

On one of these evenings grandfather was unwell, and

as he uneasily moved his head, which was swathed in a towel, upon his pillow, he lamented shrilly:

"For this I have lived, and sinned, and heaped up riches! If it were not for the shame and disgrace of it, I would call in the police, and let them be taken before the Governor to-morrow. But look at the disgrace! What sort of parents are they who bring the law to bear on their children? Well, there's nothing for you to do but to lie still under it, old man!"

He suddenly jumped out of bed, and went, staggeringly, to the window. Grandmother caught his arm. "Where are you going?" she asked.

"Light up!" he said, breathing hard.

When grandmother had lit the candle, he took the candlestick from her, and holding it close to him, as a soldier would hold a gun, he shouted from the window in loud, mocking tones:

"Hi, Mischka! You burglar! You mangy, mad cur!"

Instantly the top pane of glass was shattered to atoms, and half a brick fell on the table beside grandmother.

"Why don't you aim straight?" shrieked grandfather hysterically.

Grandmother just took him in her arms, as she would have taken me, and carried him back to bed, saying over and over again in a tone of terror:

"What are you thinking of? What are you thinking of? May God forgive you! I can see that Siberia will be the end of this for him. But in his madness he can't realise what Siberia would mean."

Grandfather moved his legs angrily, and sobbing dryly, said in a choked voice:

"Let him kill me——!"

From outside came howls, and the sound of trampling feet, and a scraping at walls. I snatched the brick from the table and ran to the window with it, but grandmother seized me in time, and hurling it into a corner, hissed:

"You little devil!"

Another time my uncle came armed with a thick stake, and broke into the vestibule of the house from the yard by breaking in the door as he stood on the top of the dark flight of steps. However, grandfather was waiting for him

on the other side, stick in hand, with two of his tenants armed with clubs, and the tall wife of the innkeeper holding a rolling-pin in readiness. Grandmother came softly behind them, murmuring in tones of earnest entreaty:

"Let me go to him! Let me have one word with him!"

Grandfather was standing with one foot thrust forward like the man with the spear in the picture called "The Bear Hunt." When grandmother ran to him, he said nothing, but pushed her away by a movement of his elbow and his foot. All four were standing in formidable readiness. Hanging on the wall above them was a lantern which cast an unflattering, spasmodic light on their countenances. I saw all this from the top staircase, and I was wishing all the time that I could fetch grandmother to be with me up there. My uncle had carried out the operation of breaking in the door with vigour and success. It had slipped out of its place and was ready to spring out of the upper hinge—the lower one was already broken away and jangled discordantly. Grandfather spoke to his companions-in-arms in a voice which repeated the same jarring sound:

"Go for his arms and legs, but let his silly head alone, please."

In the wall, at the side of the door, there was a little window, through which you could just put your head. Uncle had smashed the panes, and it looked, with the splinters sticking out all round it, like someone's black eye. To this window grandmother rushed, and putting her hand through into the yard, waved it warningly as she cried:

"Mischka! For Christ's sake go away; they will tear you limb from limb. Do go away!"

He struck at her with the stake he was holding. A broad object could be seen distinctly to pass the window and fall upon her hand, and following on this grandmother herself fell; but even as she lay on her back she managed to call out:

"Mischka! Mi—i—schka! Run!"

"Mother, where are you?" bawled grandfather in a terrific voice.

The door gave way, and framed in the black lintel stood my uncle; but a moment later he had been hurled, like a lump of mud off a spade, down the steps.

The wife of the innkeeper carried grandmother to grandfather's room, to which he soon followed her, asking morosely:

"Any bones broken?"

"Och! I should think every one of them was broken," replied grandmother, keeping her eyes closed. "What have you done with him? What have you done with him?"

"Have some sense!" exclaimed grandfather sternly. "Do you think I am a wild beast? He is lying in the cellar bound hand and foot, and I've given him a good drenching with water. I admit it was a bad thing to do; but who caused the whole trouble?"

Grandmother groaned.

"I have sent for the bone-setter. Try and bear it till he comes," said grandfather, sitting beside her on the bed. "They are ruining us, Mother—and in the shortest time possible."

"Give them what they ask for then."

"What about Varvara?"

They discussed the matter for a long time—grandmother quietly and pitifully, and grandfather in loud and angry tones.

Then a little, hump-backed old woman came, with an enormous mouth, extending from ear to ear; her lower jaw trembled, her mouth hung open like the mouth of a fish, and a pointed nose peeped over her upper lip. Her eyes were not visible. She hardly moved her feet as her crutches scraped along the floor, and she carried in her hand a bundle which rattled.

It seemed to me that she had brought death to grandmother, and darting at her I yelled with all my force:

"Go away!"

Grandfather seized me, not too gently, and, looking very cross, carried me to the attic.

(To be continued.)

Two Welsh Studies

By Caradoc Evans

The Devil in Eden

If ever the innermost meaning of the Word was in dispute in Capel Sion the Big Man sent an angel in a cloud with a message to Old Bensha of the Road, and this message Old Bensha interpreted to the congregation. Thus, honoured above men, Bensha got puffed up and vain-glorious, whereat the Big Man sent a tempter to test him.

The tempter, disguised as a tramp, came to Manteg in the quiet of a Sabbath eve, and he found Bensha setting his thoughts in tune with Sion on the bank of the waters which run at the foot of Davydd Shônes's garden.

The tramp stood over Old Bensha, and spoke to him:

"Tell you me now how far I am from the poorhouse of Castellybryn."

"Man, man," answered Bensha, "you're seven miles good and more."

Although it was then dusk the tempter made no move to pass on his journey.

"You seem weary, man bach," remarked Bensha.

"Indeed to goodness now, weary I am," answered the tramp.

"Sit you down and rest your little old feet," Bensha counselled him.

The tramp removed his shoes. His feet were blistered, wherefore he rebuked the sun and the stones on the roads, and they were dusty.

"Say from where you are, boy bach nice?" asked Bensha.

"From far enough, small male, not to want to walk another step."

"Say you where you hail from and your place of abode."

"The foxes in the fields have their holes," was the reply, "the birds of the air their nests, but I have nowhere to lay my head."

Old Bensha turned his face upon the figure on the ground, saying:

"For what you say that? Dear, dear, has not the little Big Man said, 'Ye are of more value than many sparrows'?"

"Nowhere to lay this old head," repeated the tempter, scarce opening his thick lips.

"Welshman too!" exclaimed Bensha. "Not religious are your words, man. What for you don't know that you utter these vain things in the Garden of Eden? Open your eyes, and look you. Does not this river break over there by the house of Lias the Carpenter into four heads? Saw you Shop Rhys as you came by? There the Creator placed Adam, and was not Adam the first sinner?"

The tempter opened his heavy eyelids and said:

"You male alive, now why you are not a preacher?"

Bensha's heart rejoiced.

"Iss, indeed," he said, "this is the Garden spoken of in the Book of Words. Little Respected Bryn-Bevan, the ruler of the Lord in Capel Sion, says that Eve ate of the fruit of the tree in Davydd Shônes's garden."

"Who is Davydd Shônes, whatever?" asked the tramp.

"He is the officer for poor relief," answered Bensha. "Wise indeed is Davydd. Dear man, you should hear Davydd praying! Asking the Big Man to help him find out wrong-doers."

"Ho, ho, and you say like that!" said the tempter.

Then Old Bensha sang, and this is what he sang:

"Iss, iss, dear man. This is the Garden of Eden. This is the beginning of the world. Goodness me, here was put breath into clay, here God gave Adam the tongue that I am speaking in now."

The song finished, the tempter said:

"Woe my poor flesh! I am tired."

"Of course, of course," said Bensha; and he raised his long, thin legs from the ground. "Do you come with me, dear stranger, and tarry a while in my house. But

first put on your old shoes, for it is not seemly to go about in bare feet on the eve of the Sabbath."

Bensha took the tramp home, and he bade his daughter Dinah warm up a bowl of broth and lay it before his guest; and while the tempter ate of the broth and bread, Bensha, preparing for the Sabbath when none shall work, went to the stream and cleansed his hands and face with small gravel; and when he was returned to the house he sheared the ends of his beard.

The tempter having eaten his meal, pulled off his shoes, and lit his pipe.

"Do you ever pray, brother bach?" asked Bensha.

"Brother, indeed!" said Dinah.

"Hold thy chin, little Dinah," Bensha reproved her. "Brother I mean in the spirit rather than in the letter. Brother bach, do you pray steadfast?"

"What a question, dear me!" replied the tempter. "Indeed, do I not live by faith?"

Bensha placed a bunch of tobacco inside his right cheek, and the black mole thereon moved up and down and in and out in progress with it.

"Come you now," said Dinah, "speak you your name."

"Michael," answered the tempter.

Bensha opened his Bible and read. Afterwards he removed the tobacco from his mouth and laid it on the table, and he reported to God with a clean mouth.

When he had risen from his knees and had shaken the stiffness out of his joints, Dinah addressed him:

"Little father, for why you are an old ass? Shame on you to bring here a dirty, bad tramp. What then will folk say? Tell you him to go about his business."

"Hush, hush, Dinah. Say you not so. 'Inasmuch as ye do unto the least of my little ones.' Michael is tired. Look you!"

The tramp had fallen asleep; a silver line of spittle ran from his lips along the stem of his pipe, dropping from the base of the bowl.

Bensha wound up his watch, and took off his clothes, and stepped over the mud floor to his bed which stood against the nailed-down window.

Dinah's elbows rested on her stockinged knees; her eyes were fixed on the sleeping stranger, a muscular

figure with tanned, hairy skin showing under his buttonless shirt.

Old Bensha spoke from his bed:

"Dinah, go you off to your loft now. Indulge in no evil thoughts concerning Michael. Think you no less of him, little daughter, because the Big Man has not blessed him with much."

Dinah untied the tape which held her skirt around her waist, and removed the cotton bodice which covered her loosely hanging breasts, and went up the ladder into the loft.

In the morning she baked a loaf of plank bread, which with a bowl of milk warm from the cow she laid before the tramp; to her father she observed:

"I think that old serpent of a straggler can abide here a time, and help to do something about the place. What say you now if he set to mend the wall of the pigsty?"

The tempter fattened many days in Bensha's house. He built a new wall to the pigsty, and on the door of the cowshed he contrived a bolt.

On the afternoon of the second Sunday after his coming he went in and lay with Dinah, and when they had committed their sin, the woman was revengeful, and she cried to him:

"Go your way! Take to the dung hill! You lout! For sure I will shout your wickedness." She seized his head and clawed his scalp, until the tramp's hair was dyed red.

But Michael understood the ways of women, and Dinah, far from divulging what had taken place, went out in the darkness of that night, and slept with him on a little straw spread on the floor of the cow stall.

In the ripeness of time Dinah sorely repented herself, and was much afraid; she drew in the seams of her garments, and pressed herself as butter is pressed into an over-full cask.

People remarked her, and said things one to another.

Bensha spoke to his daughter.

"Bad you were to go out of your way to tempt poor Michael. Tell you the boy bach that it's good for him to get beyond the sense of your wickedness."

Dinah acted; she said to Michael:

"Get you out of our home, the old hen! Get away, else I'll stick this old pitchfork in your sinful eyes."

Michael grew feared, and departed; but in a week he came back.

"Sure, dear me, now," he observed to Bensha, "you won't turn your guest into the highway. Let me rest in your house for a small period."

"Remain here as long as you like, little son," replied Bensha. "But steel your heart against the wiles of my wench."

During the month which followed Dinah employed divers methods to rid the house of Michael. She entrusted him with a sovereign to go to Danyrefail to buy a suckling, hoping he would decamp with the money. She sent him with a basket of sixty eggs to Shop Rhys, each egg worth a penny. She also dispatched him with the price of half a sackful of bran to the Shop. But Michael, to her great distress, performed these errands faithfully.

In the twilight of an afternoon Dinah was preparing Bensha's supper. Michael was sleeping in a chair under the chimney. The room was illumined by a small glare from the fire; Dinah turned around, and she beheld that Michael's feet were cloven hoofs, and that from his head there came forth two horns. In the twinkling of an eye she realised whom she had been entertaining. Hastening into the lower parlour, she placed the palms of her hands on the cover of the Bible, and prayed:

"In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, get thee behind me, Satan. Jesus bach, be with your ruler in Capel Sion. Amen."

She re-entered the kitchen.

"Michael, man," she said, "how say you to a nice cup of tea?"

"Iss, indeed, Dinah," answered the tramp.

Dinah lifted an empty tin pitcher.

"Dear now," she exclaimed, "what pity! There's not a drop of water. Go you and draw some."

The tramp pushed his feet into his clogs.

"Give me the old pitcher then," he said.

"Have I not need of the pitcher for milking?" Dinah said.

"I'll bring it in the bucket that is outside the pigsty," said Michael, walking to the door.

"Don't you be dirty, boy bach," cried Dinah. "That bucket is for the pigs' wash."

Michael had moved to the threshold and was holding the door ajar. He looked along the road and saw that Davydd Shônes, the officer for Poor Relief, was running towards the house.

He came back into the kitchen.

"What shall I fetch it in then?" he asked. "Be you hasty now, for am I not thirsty?"

"Dear me, what a calf you are, man! Bring it in this," and Dinah gave him the cinder sifter.

Though all these happenings occurred eight years ago, those of the congregation who are given to seeing visions still see on dark nights the Angel Michael attempting the task Dinah set him.

A Just Man in Sodom

The haymakers, gathering in the hay of Sadrach Danyrefail, rested in the shadow of the hedge, eating their midday porridge and skimmed milk.

Sadrach the Little raised his voice:

"Come you now, Pedr, give us a little bit of a sermon, man. Stand you in the old cart."

"Iss, iss," said Martha, the stranger woman who ruled at Danyrefail, "do you do this thing we ask of you."

The workers raised their mouths from their wooden bowls.

"Goodness now," said Pedr, "why should I, beloved of the little Big Man, preach from a common cart when there is a pulpit in Capel Sion?"

"Oh, Pedr, Pedr," Sadrach the Little said, "do we not always say that you ought to judge us in Capel Sion? Sure there is some thing you can bear witness to before we go on with the old hay. Turn you your mind now, and say sayings to us."

"Think you truly I ought to be a preacher?" asked

Pedr, his eyes shining with vanity. "There's happy would I be if they'd let me preach from a pulpit bach."

Sadrach the Large then addressed Pedr:

"Preach you to us for ten minutes, and I'll take a hat round for a collection. Indeed to goodness, I will now."

"Sadrach! Sadrach!" said Martha. "What for you make such a foolish promise? Man, man, you are as silly as Pedr. Come, little people, have you not rested long enough?"

But Pedr, open-mouthed, was standing in the cart; his large eyes looked upon the fertile land between him and Avon Bern, where grazed Sadrach's cows, the best herd in the neighbourhood, and where flourished Sadrach's corn, the most pleasant sight in all the land. Sadrach the Little threw at him a handful of horse-dung, which fell on Pedr's open lips and the never-shaved hairs that curled on his chin.

"Pedr, indeed to goodness, there's slow are you, man," remarked Sadrach the Large.

"Praying was I, Sadrach bach, for strength to speak unto this gathering."

"Sober now," said Sadrach the Large, "you must not go as far as that."

Pedr took a text and spoke to the people, whereon one turned to the other, whispering:

"Dull Pedr brays like a mule."

From where he was lying on the ground Sadrach the Little cried:

"Tell us, Pedr, man, about the vision you had the last night but one. Do you be soon."

"Woe is me!" exclaimed Pedr. "The Big Man, forgive me for forgetting what the little white Jesus told me."

"Come on, Pedr; come on, Pedr," cried the haymakers.

Pedr gazed on those below him.

"Boys bach nice," he said, "Jesus did speak to me about you, and He did say things of great concern about Capel Sion. My dears, do you let Pedr now say a small prayer first."

Pedr closed his eyes and sang after the manner of the rulers of the pulpit.

Sadrach the Little crawled forward on his belly and dug the prongs of his pitching fork into Pedr.

"The message! The message!" he cried. "Jasto, what a slow mare you are."

"Do you let the fool be," counselled Martha. "What is the matter for you, man? Come down from the old cart."

Pedr eyed the people indulgently.

"Wasn't that a fairish prayer?" he asked.

"As good as Bryn-Bevan's," was the response.

"As good as Bryn-Bevan's!" repeated Pedr.

"Iss, iss, you old owl. Deliver the message."

"Does not the least among you think he is wiser than Pedr?" he reproached them. "But am I not rich in grace? To whom did the little white Jesus come last night? He never visited even Essec. For why? Because when old Essec was dying he said wily words to his son Joshua Llanwen: 'Keep your purse full and the strings tight, and nothing will fail you.'"

"But, Pedr," Sadrach the Large explained, "Essec meant these things to come after religion."

"Did he now?" said Pedr. "Dear me, there's a blockhead am I. I did not know."

"If I die, Pedr is madder than ever!" said one.

"Oh, I am wise to-day. Pedr is wise with the wisdom of God. Am I not among the prophets? See you, I am come after little Elijah, and Jeremiah, and Daniel. What a boy brave Dan bach was, for sure. The white Jesus said to me, 'Pedr, I look to you to save Capel Sion.'"

"If we let the fool go on blaspheming," Martha interrupted, "the good Big Man will punish us with rain before half the hay is in stack."

"I am a man of God," Pedr drivelled. "Hearken you now to my voice, for do not my sayings come from Him whose mercy is as bountiful as the hay around us, and whose anger is as furious as the bull who frightened Achsah the wife of Sadrach into giving birth to Sadrach the Little on the threshold of Danyrefail. 'The children of Capel Sion,' said the little white Jesus, 'are walking in the ways of the Bad Man."

"Pedr bach," said Sadrach the Large, "have you care

now. Don't you, little male, trifle with the name of the Big Man."

Pedr closed his ears against the warning.

"The Big Man is angry with you," he resumed, "and His anger consumes like the fire which ate up the hay of Griffith Wern, though His mercy is as the waters of Morfa. 'Pedr bach,' said the little white Jesus, 'tell you them to turn away from their adulterous ways, for when the Lord hurteth a man He hurteth him to death. Tell you them that they are as wicked as the old blacks of Sodom.'"

Sadrach the Little flung a rake at Pedr's head.

"Now, now, that is not like the offspring of a religious father," Sadrach the Large rebuked his son. "Be you calm, my child. The temptation is great, but remember you that Pedr is not right in his head."

"O my people," Pedr continued, "listen. Thus said the Big Man: 'Capel Sion has become as a temple of pig buyers; a woman without glory. Pedr bach, do you say to them that I will destroy their crops and rot their bones that not one male, nor female, nor child shall rise from the grave when my little servant Gabriel blows on his old trumpet. They will abide among the filthy, creeping things of the earth.'"

Martha interposed: "Throw you the vain crow out, Sadrach, else sure something bad will hap to me and your father for harbouring him in our land."

Pedr continued: "Said the little white Jesus: 'Mind you, Pedr bach, not to forget to tell the sons of Capel Sion that they have thieved from the widow and the orphan; tell you the daughters too, Pedr bach, that they speak slander and deal lightly with the things that are holy in my sight.' There's sayings for you! What for you laugh, boys bach? Is not the Judge of the earth right? Would you laugh at Daniel? At Elijah? Why for you laugh? You will have, dear me, to change your thinks if you will wear the White Shirts."

So Pedr assumed the mantle of a prophet. Children mocked him and stoned him, and threw clods of earth at him; men and women reviled him, inquiring of him always: "How now, Pedr, anything new from the Palace?"

He left the house where he dwelt, and went to

live on the moor. There, on the brim of the stone quarry, he built a hut of mud, and the roof he covered with dry heather, and at a distance of eight feet therefrom he threw up a mound of earth which he called an altar and he dedicated it unto God.

In the hut he fasted and meditated, and by the altar he prayed continually.

The evening of the fifth day after Sadrach's hay had been stacked a heavy rain fell upon West Wales, and this rain lasted many days, destroying much of the crops. Diligently the men of Capel Sion searched their souls: they found no reason to suppose that this was the judgment of God. They gathered themselves in Capel Sion and prayed for deliverance.

Pedr journeyed down from the moor and waited outside the gates that admit you into Capel Sion, and as the congregation departed, he cried:

"Little people, why value you the things that perish more than the living soul?"

Sadrach Danyrefail derided him.

"A bad prophet you are indeed," he said. "What for you didn't say the rain was coming, man, so as to save all this nasty bother? Goodness me, you are a frog! There's vexed Martha is since you waggled your wild tongue in the hayfield. Prophet! Who made you judge in Capel Sion? Think you the Big Man chooses you before me and the Respected Bryn-Bevan to be His mouthpiece?"

"Woe to you, Sadrach Danyrefail," announced Pedr. "Your dishonour makes the little angels weep."

Sadrach spat in his face.

"Dear people——" began Pedr.

"Pedr," said Sadrach, "bits of sermons now and again are all right, but when you take the name of the Big Man in vain, well-well, it is very sinful."

"My soul," exclaimed Pedr, "is as clean as the soul of Elijah."

"Hearken you now, Pedr," said Sadrach jestingly, "can you bring the dead to life? Elijah could. And, dear me, where are your sacrifices? You can't bring an old turnip to life, man."

The people pushed Pedr hither and thither. He fell

on his knees and asked God to protect his skin, but all his words did not save his body from one stone nor one clod of earth.

All through that night Pedr prayed at the side of the altar he had dedicated unto the Big Father.

When Sadrach the Little fetched the cows in the morning, which was the Sabbath, he saw that the bull calf was missing. He searched in all the fields and in many of those of his neighbours. Returning to Danyrefail, he climbed up into his father's room.

"Little father," he said, "the old bull calf is lost."

"Now careless someone has been. Was the gate shut, Sadrach?"

"Indeed, iss, it was."

"The calf couldn't open the gate, boy," said Martha.

"Wise your speech," said Sadrach the Large. "Hie you and look again. But mouth you to no one your mission. Recollect that this is the Sabbath. Still, it is not sinning to look for a lost sheep on the Sabbath, but let it not be said that a bad example comes from Danyrefail."

That Sabbath morning Pedr hailed a man who was crossing the moor to Capel Sion.

"Man bach," he said to him, "do you hurry quickly now, and tell them in Sion to come up the mountain, because this day the Big Creator is manifesting Himself. For this hour, man bach, you are a messenger of the white little Jesus."

The man laughed the news to those with whom he fell in. He laughed it to Sadrach the Large.

"The old cuckoo must be sent to the madhouse," said Sadrach.

Sadrach walked as far as the gates of Capel Sion, then he turned back and went up to the moor. As he neared the hut, Pedr ran to him, and threw his arm around his neck.

"Sadrach Danyrefail," he said, "there's joyous I am you've come. Sing a hymn of gladness, Sadrach Danyrefail, for to-day the Bad Man departs from Capel Sion."

Pedr led Sadrach to the altar, and on the top of it was the bull calf, slowly bleeding to death.

"Son of hell!" cried Sadrach when he saw this sacrilege. "For what you do this with my calf which is worth

great yellow gold? I'll have the law on you in half-an-hour, even if it is the Sabbath."

He hit out with his arm, and Pedr fell against the altar, and the blood of the calf fell on his face.

"Dear Sadrach," he said when he had risen to his feet, "this is the sacrifice that is going to wipe away the sins of Capel Sodom. Indeed, indeed, it is now. But, lo, the Big Man is not mean. He is satisfied with the blood only. Look you now, I will bring back your old calf to life. The white Jesus will do this for His prophet."

Pedr spread his hands over the carcase of the dying beast.

"In the name of the little white Jesus, return you to life, little bull calf," he said. "Jesus bach, do you bring this about for the sake of your servant's good name."

Le Mystère des Trois Rois

Par Emile Cammaerts

I.—Au Ciel.

Une série de larges degrés menant à une porte au fond, devant laquelle se tiennent, armés de pied en cap, les trois archanges : Michel (au milieu), Gabriel (à droite), et Raphaël (à gauche). La scène est drapée d'or. Le Récitant se tient sur le proscénium.

Chœur (*invisible*). Ce que nous pleurâmes jadis
Rit dans nos prières,
Nous sommes les voix du Paradis
Dansant dans la lumière.

Ce que nous souffrîmes sur terre
Exalte notre ronde,
Nous sommes l'âme du monde
Chantant dans la lumière.

Loué sois-tu, Soleil Eternel,
Dont nous suivons la carrière,
Qui nous enivre de Ton ciel
Et nous baigne de Ta lumière.

Le Récitant. Au seuil du Paradis, se dressent les rois archanges.

Michel. Mon frère Gabriel,
Depuis combien de temps
Veillons-nous devant l'autel ?

Gabriel. Depuis que le monde est monde,
Et que l'ombre de Satan
Rôde sur la terre et sur l'onde.

Michel. Mon frère Raphaël,
Depuis combien de temps
Veillons-nous devant l'autel ?

RAPHAËL. Depuis le péché d'Eve,
Depuis que la trahison d'Adam
Nous arma du glaive.
CHŒUR (*lointain*). Loué sois-tu, Soleil Eternel. . . .
LE RÉCITANT. Le chant des Elus s'éteint au loin comme le chant des oiseaux à l'approche de la nuit.
GABRIEL. Pourquoi mes armes me pèsent-elles ?
Pourquoi les anges se taisent-ils ?
Qui vient là-bas ?
RAPHAËL. Pourquoi mes ailes se ferment-elles ?
Pourquoi le vent se lève-t-il ?
Qui marche là-bas ?
MICHEL. Pourquoi une sainte fureur
Etreint-elle mon cœur ?
VOIX DE SATAN. Jésus, Jésus !
LE RÉCITANT. Avez-vous entendu ?
VOIX DE SATAN. Jésus-Christ.
LE RÉCITANT. C'est lui.
VOIX DE SATAN. Emmanuël, Sauveur adorable.
LE RÉCITANT. L'Innommable.
VOIX DE SATAN. Verbe sans tache, Sauveur glorieux,
Fils de l'Homme et Fils de Dieu !

(*Il entre par le proscénium en ricanant.*)

MICHEL. Si tu veux te faire entendre,
Agenouille-toi et prie.
SATAN. Je n'ai pas le temps d'attendre
Que Sa grâce me sourie.
GABRIEL. Agenouille-toi—
RAPHAËL. Et prie. . . .
SATAN. Tandis qu'Il se grisait de louanges
Que lui chantaient Ses anges,
Tandis qu'Il regardait tourner
Les sphères et voguer les nuages,
Tandis qu'Il était beau, tandis qu'Il était sage,
Tandis qu'Il cultivait son âme,
Je travaillais, moi, dans la boue, dans la fumée,
Par le charbon et par la flamme,
Hérissant la terre de cheminées
Plus hautes que Ses églises,
Dominant la science et la pensée,

La synthèse et l'analyse,
Forgeant, dans le silence des laboratoires,
Les instruments de ma victoire.

MICHEL. Qu'importe que l'homme travaille pour toi
Si son cœur résiste à ta voix?

SATAN. Il est un peuple élu,
Au centre du monde chrétien,
Un peuple que j'ai vaincu,
Que je tiens dans la main.
Je suis le Jéhovah de cette nouvelle Judée
Cent fois plus vaste et plus peuplée,
Je suis l'idole d'airin d'une nation de fer
Contre qui se brisera l'univers.
Depuis des ans et puis des ans,
Je distille entre ses lèvres
Le poison enivrant
De mon orgueil et de ma fièvre.
J'ai réduit en esclavage
Des millions d'hommes libres, des milliers de sages
Qui ne courbent l'échine que pour mieux opprimer
Et qui ne s'applatissent que pour mieux écraser. . .
Laissez-moi passer.

LE RÉCITANT. Il s'avance vers la porte.

MICHEL. Seuls ceux qui possèdent la foi
Peuvent contempler le Roi des Rois.

SATAN. Je dois lui parler.

GABRIEL. Seuls ceux qui le portent dans leur cœur
Peuvent parler à leur Sauveur.

SATAN. Vous ne pouvez m'arrêter. . . .

RAPHAËL. Seuls ceux qui abdiquent tout orgueil
Peuvent espérer franchir ce seuil.

SATAN. Jésus, Jésus, Jésus-Christ,
Entends ma voix, vers Toi je crie!

LE RÉCITANT. La porte s'est ouverte. Le soleil m'éblouit.

SATAN. Au nom des femmes, des vieillards, des enfants,
Au nom des villes paisibles
Et des villages somnolents,
Je te conjure de ne rien faire
Pour arrêter l'élan irrésistible
De mes hordes guerrières.
Que tes prêtres paralysent de leur doléances

Le courage de mes ennemis,
Que tes disciples prêchent le calme et la prudence,
La paix et l'oubli,
Et je te promets une guerre
Pieuse, charitable, humanitaire!

LA VOIX DU CHRIST. Retire-toi, Satan.

SATAN. Ton royaume n'est pas de ce monde.
Que t'importe une vaine apparence
Si tu possèdes la foi profonde?
N'as-tu pas donné l'exemple de la patience?
Que t'importe que j'aie le corps
Si tu conserves l'esprit?
N'as-tu pas vaincu la mort?
N'as-tu pas dit:
"Qui vaincra par le glaive
Périra par le glaive"?
Garde ta croix
Mais laisse-moi l'épée,
Garde ta foi,
Mais laisse-moi régner!

LA VOIX DU CHRIST. Retire-toi, Satan.

SATAN. Cède, Jésus, il en est encore temps.
Mes ennemis sont désunis, dispersés,
Tu leur as tant parlé de fraternité
Qu'ils en ont oublié leur patrie,
Tu leur as tant prêché la tendresse et l'amour
Qu'ils ne savent plus sacrifier leur vie.
Que peuvent ces peuples de velours
Contre mon peuple de fer?
Que peut leur folle assurance
Contre ma prévoyance?
Que peut leur bonne foi contre ma malice?
Que peut leur Paradis contre mon Enfer?

LA VOIX DU CHRIST. Heureux ceux qui ont faimet soif de Justice,
Je suis le Bon Pasteur qui garde ses brebis.
Retire-toi, Maudit!

LE RÉCITANT. C'en est fait. La porte se referme, le soleil disparaît.

SATAN (*vers le public*). Je vous prends à témoin que je voulais la paix.
S'il m'avait laissé faire,

J'aurais opéré sans douleur, sans délais.
Le monde se serait, un beau jour, réveillé
Sous mon aile tutélaire
Et le baume de ma culture
Aurait bientôt guéri ses blessures.
Il va falloir maintenant
Que je chausse les bottes, que je coiffe le casque
De mon impérial lieutenant,
Que je confonde sa raison,
Et que je guide moi-même, sous ce masque,
Ses sauvages légions.

CHŒUR (*au loin*). Ce que nous pleurâmes jadis
Rit dans nos prières,
Nous sommes les voix du Paradis
Dansant dans la lumière. . . .

SATAN. Oh! Je te prépare un concert
Qui troublera la sereine harmonie
De ton ciel clair,
Où les sanglots des filles violées, les cris de la folie,
Les hurlements des mères,
Se marieront joyeusement
Au lointain tonnerre
Du bombardement,
Où l'immense plainte d'un peuple crucifié
Montera jusqu'à toi
Dans la fumée,
Où les craquements des bûchers
Etoufferont, sous leur fracas,
Les faibles râles des nouveaux nés. . . .

LE RÉCITANT. Michel lève le bras et fait, avec son glaive, un grand signe de croix. Satan a disparu.

CHŒUR (*plus près*). Ce que nous souffrîmes sur terre
Exalte notre ronde,
Nous sommes l'âme du monde
Chantant dans la luimière. . . .

MICHEL. Mon frère Gabriel,
Depuis combien de temps
Veillons-nous devant l'autel?

GABRIEL. Depuis que le monde est monde
Et que l'ombre de Satan
Rôde sur la terre et sur l'onde.

MICHEL. Mon frère Raphaël,
Depuis combien de temps
Veillons-nous devant l'autel?
RAPHAËL. Depuis le péché d'Eve,
Depuis que la trahison d'Adam
Nous arma du glaive.
CHŒUR. Loué sois-tu, Soleil Eternel,
Dont nous suivons la carrière,
Qui nous enivre de Ton ciel
Et nous baigne de Ta lumière. . . .
GABRIEL. Pourquoi mes armes deviennent-elles si légères?
MICHEL. Parce que nous possèderons la terre.
RAPHAËL. Pourquoi mes ailes s'ouvrent-elles?
MICHEL. Parce que Dieu est bon et que la vie est belle.

II.—SUR TERRE.

Même disposition que pour la Scène I. A la place de la porte, au fond, les armes de l'empereur (un aigle de fer) sont fixées au mur. Immédiatement en dessous, l'empereur est assis, endormi sur son trône, casqué et cuirassé, l'épée au côté. Au bas des gradins, deux gardes sont assoupis, appuyés contre la porte à gauche. La salle, drapée de violet, est éclairée d'en haut par une lumière invisible.

LE RÉCITANT. L'Empereur repose sur son trône dans le palais du roi.
1ER GARDE. Tu ne dors pas?
2E GARDE. Toi non plus.
1ER GARDE. A quoi penses-tu?
2E GARDE. Je pense à ceux que nous avons perdus,
A ceux que nous perdrons.
1ER GARDE. Il faut se faire une raison. . . .
Regarde où cette femme m'a mordu.
On voit la place de chaque dent.
Je crois que j'avais trop bu. . . .
Tu es marié?
2E GARDE. Depuis l'an dernier.
1ER GARDE. Un enfant?
2E GARDE. Une petite fille. . . .

Elles dorment ensemble dans le grand lit.
La mère rêve quand je suis absent ;
Elles rêvera longtemps. . . .

1ER GARDE. Que veux-tu ? C'est la guerre.

2E GARDE. Oui, c'est la guerre. . . .

LE RÉCITANT. Ils s'endorment, appuyés sur leur lances.

CHŒUR (*invisible*). Pitié, pitié, seigneur!
Nous avons froid, nous avons peur.

LE RÉCITANT. C'est la plainte des femmes enfermées dans les caves.

CHŒUR. Nous avons vu brûler nos toits,
Nous avons vu crouler nos clochers,
Nous avons vu nos pères et nos maris
Tomber en tas
Sous nos yeux égarés.
Nous avons fui, dans la nuit,
Devant tes soldats.
Nos pieds saignent, nous avons peur,
Pitié, pitié, seigneur !

LE RÉCITANT. Il dort paisiblement, songeant à ses conquêtes.

LE CHŒUR. La vie était si bonne, avant que tu ne viennes,
Les jeunes gens marchaient, la main dans la main,
Par les chemins,
Les semeurs arpentaient la plaine,
Et les vaches, à la brune,
Rentraient à l'étable, une à une,
En meuglant
Doucement.
Nos cœurs se serrent, nous avons peur,
Pourquoi, pourquoi, seigneur ?

LE RÉCITANT. Il soulève lentement la tête.

CHŒUR. Entends les larmes, écoutes les cris
De nos petits,
Ceux qu'on a plantés au bout des baïonnettes,
Ceux qu'on a jetés tout vivants dans les puits,
Ceux dont la bouche avide
Suce en vain nos seins vides.
Ils ont froid, ils ont faim :
Que t'ont-ils fait ?

L'EMPEREUR. Ils sont dans mon chemin.

LE RÉCITANT. Il se lève. Les femmes tremblent. Tout se tait comme avant l'orage.

L'EMPEREUR. Mon chemin marche devant moi
Dans une trombe de fumée,
Mon chemin va tout droit,
De crête en crête,
De vallée en vallée,
C'est le sillon de mon armée,
Malheur à qui l'arrête!
Mon chemin balaie tout devant lui,
Il écrase les cœurs, il étouffe les cris,
Il fait gronder le tonnerre
Et déchaîne la tempête,
C'est le char de la guerre,
Malheur à qui l'arrête!

LE RÉCITANT. Un soldat se dresse au pied du trône. Il est jeune, il est calme, il est fier comme un roi.

L'EMPEREUR. Mon chemin écrase sous son poids
Les villes en ruine.
Il n'entend ni ne voit
Ce qu'il piétine.
C'est une superbe machine,
Sans cœur et sans âme,
Que je remonte chaque matin,
Et qui, chaque soir, dans le sang et les flammes,
Me mène un peu plus loin
Vers le but de mes conquêtes. . . .

LE SOLDAT. Et gloire à qui l'arrête!

LE RÉCITANT. L'Empereur descend vers le soldat.

L'EMPEREUR. Qui parle quand je parle? Qui es-tu?

LE SOLDAT. Celui que tu n'attendais pas.

L'EMPEREUR. L'exilé, le vaincu?

LE SOLDAT. Celui qui te vaincra.

L'EMPEREUR. Le chef sans suite? Le Roi-sans-terre?

LE SOLDAT. Le Roi-soldat.

L'EMPEREUR. D'où viens-tu?

LE SOLDAT. De ma frontière.

L'EMPEREUR. Qu'est devenue
Ton armée?

LE SOLDAT. Elle est à l'Est, au Nord, à l'Ouest, au Midi,
Partout où ton nom est maudit,

Où le mien est sacré,
Où l'on respecte le bien d'autrui
Et la parole donnée,
Où l'on déteste la tyrannie,
Où l'on chérit la liberté,
Partout où l'homme a conservé
Sa dignité,
Partout où la vie
Danse d'un pied léger,
Partout où la grâce et la beauté
Se narguent de tes menaces,
Partout où la bonté est reine,
Partout où l'honneur est roi,
Partout où l'âme est pleine
De courage et de foi—
Mon armée—
C'est l'humanité!

LE RÉCITANT. L'Empereur veut l'arrêter mais le soldat s'évanouit comme une ombre.

L'EMPEREUR. Je le tenais ici, désarmé,
Dans la plus sûre de mes prisons. . . .
Comment s'est-il échappé?
Homme ou vision,
Corps ou esprit,
Je méprise tes bravades,
Je te défie!
Même si le monde entier se ruait contre moi,
En une folle croisade,
Je vaincrais ce monde là!
Je le briserais sous mon talon,
Je le broierais dans mon poing,
Je le re-créerais à ma façon,
Selon mes besoins!
N'ai-je pas mon peuple, n'ai-je pas mes soldats?
N'ai-je pas la Force qui prime le Droit?
Ne puis-je faire, à coups de canon,
Que le mal devienne le bien
Et que le mensonge outrage en vain
La raison?
Ne suis-je pas l'Elu, ne suis-je pas l'Unique?
Celui dont la parole fatidique
Décrète le Destin?

LE RÉCITANT. La Mère est venu s'asseoir sur le trône avec son Enfant. Elle chante :—

LA MÈRE. Dors, mon petit fils,
Sur la paille d'or,
Dors, rêve et souris,
Le monde t'adore. . . .

LE RÉCITANT. L'Empereur l'écoute sans la voir.

LA MÈRE. Dors, mon enfant, dors,
Les rois s'humilient
Dans la soie et l'or,
Et les bergers prient. . . .

L'EMPEREUR. Est-ce une voix en moi ?
Ou y a-t-il quelqu'un là ?

LA MÈRE. Dors, mon petit fils,
Sous l'étoile d'or,
Dors, rêve et souris,
Les anges t'adorent.

L'EMPEREUR. Quel est ce chant lointain ?
Il me semble que je me souviens. . . .

LA MÈRE. Dors, mon enfant, dors—
Ne te réveille pas—
Le ciel est ton trône,
Le jour ta couronne,
Et ton sceptre d'or
Une croix de bois.

L'EMPEREUR. Tais-toi, tu blasphèmes,
Il n'y a qu'un roi ici—c'est moi.
Partout j'ai fait cacher sa croix
Sous mes emblèmes.
(*Montrant l'aigle*) Regarde, ici même,
L'aigle impérial vient d'effacer
La morne image du Crucifié.

LA MÈRE. Dieu te jugera.

L'EMPEREUR. Quel Dieu ? Celui d'hier ou de demain ?
Celui d'ici ou de là-bas ?
Le tien ou le mien ?

LA MÈRE. Celui que je tiens dans les bras.

L'EMPEREUR. Voilà deux mille ans qu'il est mort.

LA MÈRE. Et deux mille ans qu'il revit.

L'EMPEREUR. Je suis grand, je suis fort,
Il est au ciel, bien loin. . . .

LA MÈRE. Nous avions froid, dans cette cave, nous avions faim.
J'ai cherché partout,
Je n'ai trouvé qu'ici
Un abri digne de lui.
L'EMPEREUR. Es-tu folle, femme, ou suis-je fou?
LA MÈRE. Ce n'est pas la première fois
Que je rencontre tes soldats.
Ce n'est pas la première fois
Que j'entends les cris des Saints Innocents
L'EMPEREUR. Sais-tu qui je suis?
LA MÈRE. Hérode, Néron, Satan,
C'est toujours toi que j'ai fui
Par tous les sentiers.
Je ne fuirai plus aujourd'hui.
Je n'irai pas plus loin.
L'EMPEREUR. Tu veux me braver?
LA MÈRE. Non. Je suis lasse. (*Elle prie.*)
L'EMPEREUR. Pourquoi joins-tu les mains?
LA MÈRE. Je prie Dieu qu'il t'accorde une grâce.
L'EMPEREUR. Je n'ai que faire
De tes prières.
LA MÈRE. Je prie mon fils qu'Il te punisse
Quand il en est encore temps,
Afin qu'Il t'épargne le châtiment
De son éternelle justice.
L'EMPEREUR. Emporte-Le! Va-t-en!
LA MÈRE. Même si l'univers s'inclinait devant toi,
Même si tu avais vaincu le dernier de tes ennemis,
Même si tes crimes devenaient des exploits,
Même si tu avais détruit
L'honneur, la conscience et la foi,
Toute la force de ton armée,
Toute la science des tes savants
Ne parviendraient pas à soulever
Cet Enfant.
L'EMPEREUR. Ne me tente pas plus longtemps.
LA MÈRE (*chantant*). Dors, mon petit, dors,
Le ciel est ton trône
La nuit ta couronne
Et les astres d'or

S'ouvrent sous tes pieds
Comme des fleurs dans un pré.

LE RÉCITANT. Il tire son glaive et en frappe le trône. La mère et l'enfant ont déjà disparu, mais le grand aigle de fer qui pendait au mur s'abat avec fracas et le Crucifié regarde l'Empereur.

L'EMPEREUR. Ce n'est pas moi, ce n'est pas moi,
C'est celui qui tenait mon épée,
Qui l'a brandie contre toi,
C'est celui qui possède
Mon âme égarée,
Qui dirigea mon bras,
C'est celui qui obsède
Mes jours et mes nuits
De ses clameurs farouches,
Celui qui guide tous mes pas,
Celui qui parle par ma bouche
Et qui voit par mes yeux.—
Eloigne-toi, Satan,
Laisse-moi seul, seul avec Dieu,
Peut-être en est-il encore temps ?
Ne ricane pas—laisse-moi prier,
Laisse-moi pleurer, laisse-moi souffrir,
Laisse les fleurs du repentir s'épanouir
Dans mon cœur crucifié.
Tais-toi—Laisse-moi mourir !

LE RÉCITANT. L'empereur se relève et Satan lui répond par ses propres lèvres, en l'entraînant à sa suite.

SATAN. Vit-on jamais pareil ingrat ?
Toi qui fit trembler le monde
Que serais-tu sans moi ?
Je croyais mieux te connaître,
Fantoche, vantard, bravache,
Je te savais menteur, je ne te savais pas traître,
Je te savais cruel, je ne te savais pas lâche.
Je ne sais ce qui me retient de te laisser à toi-même.
L'enfer rougira d'une si piètre conquête.
Tu n'es pas digne de l'anathème
Qui pèse sur ta tête. . . .
Viens donc, ne reste pas là,
Tes pleurs sont des blasphèmes. . . .

Viens donc . . . suis-moi . . . suis-moi . . .
Laisse toute espérance. . . .
(*Il sort à reculons, les bras tendus vers le crucifix.*)

Voix du Christ. C'est à moi qu'appartient la vengeance.

Chœur des Femmes (*au loin*)—
Dors, mon enfant, dors—
Ne te reveille pas—
Le ciel est ton trône,
Le jour ta couronne,
Et ton sceptre d'or
Une croix de bois.

The Manx Cat

By Mabel Corran

THE one thas livin' nex' dhure is tremenjous cross. Balla thas me lil' frien' an' me can' a beer the sight o' her. You'll be whonderin' who the one is fur all. It's as like you've not heerd of her befoore. Her is a one tho'. Thcere callin' her Mrs. Gearge, she was rarin' in Englan'. Her is teachin' me Maa the scutchins ter giv'. I've not heerd tell or put a sight in on Mr. Gearge, as like as not he's with the wans from up. Maybe her wouldn' be that of'en in our hous' if he were in tho'.

A rale weiss cat were our Billy, rumpy an' all. He died though an' me Maa wouldn' hear tell on me buryin' him in our garden, an' I was thinkin' it weere jus' as good buryin' him nex' dhure.

So I ups and gets Balla ter giv' me a heis on the wall. Her was houlin' me han' an' I was feelin' safeter an' was seein' handy from theer. Then I jumps over sof' like and creeps along. Balla over t'other side was talkin' that gentle and aisy, sayin':

"Jus' ye be spry now, Mona, I think I am hearin' someones comin'."

I was skeered tremenjous an' I lay that freckend thinkin' me shadda was one of them ones. But I ups like lightenin' an' digs them oul' flowers Mrs. Gearge thinks a deal on an' theer I places Billy, givin' him a rale Christian buriel.

The nex' marnin' her foun' it out an' sen' Billy back to our ones sayin':

"I'm thinkin' theere's as much buryin' accommodation in yer garden as theer is in mine, Misthress Boyd."

Them two was not speakin' for days.

Theere's a grey cat nex' dhure an' th' owl Misthress Gearge thinks a deal on her, callin' her Sally.

Me Daa was sayin' he'd be afther shootin' her or givin' her poison. Aye, but me Maa beg an' beg terribl' hard sayin': "Daa, hav' a keer, what's come on yer, mann? She be that fon' on Sally an' ye'll be givin' the Manx ones a bad name. Her'll be goin' back ter Englan' one of them days an' tellin'."

"Bless me sowl, if I wasn' thinkin' on yer I'd do it for all," me Daa was answerin'.

Balla an' me gets one penny fur the week to be spendin'. Herself an' me was thinkin' it were middlin' lil', fur them sweets is e't afore yer knows. I were thinkin' it was gran' to find wheere we could be earnin' somethin', an' then I thinks on all them sweets that could be e't at us, an' me mouth is watterin' terribl'. Me Maa an' Daa mus'n' be hearin' what I'm thinkin' or they'd be that cross tremenjous.

"Go ter Quine's the baker manns, and bring me some Bonnags, Mona," me Maa was sayin'. An' I run out to buy them Bonnags.

The Quine ones are that proud now. They are the ones thas livin' in the gran' yeller house roun' the carner.

I was buyin' them Bonnags an' theer facin' me was written them words: "Los' a white cat, anyone findin' and returnin' ter 5 Grant Sthreet, will be receivin' five shillin'."

I kep' on readin' an' thinkin', an' thinkin' an' readin', an' I seed befoore me all them Turkey Nobs, Isle o' Man Rock, an' all them sweets. An' thinkin' I ran an' tol' Balla.

"Aye," Balla was sayin', "we mus' fin' that theer cat an' yer mus' be givin' me half the five shillin', Mona."

"I'll go straight, Balla."

"Then I'll be jinin' in, Mona," she was answerin'.

"Shall us be cat chasin' tomorrer?" I was sayin'.

"My, yer not half smart neither, theer's nothin' like the presen', let's be chasin' now," Balla was answerin'.

Her an' me searched an' searched an' foun' all them differen' colours an' never a white one tho' was to be seen. Then I heerd Balla shoutin': "Come you here, Mona, look theer."

An' lo an' behoul', sittin' quiet like were a white pussy. Sof' like her an' me crep' up, an' I was jus' puttin' me han' out ter catch it, when up jumps that theer cat an' run an' run, an' her an' me chasin' till theer was no puff lef'

at us. But Balla is a smart one fur all an' chase up an' down them lanes as fas' as fas', an' I weere shoutin': "Balla, theer she's comin' . . . theer . . . roun' by them threes . . . oh! she's up fer all." Quick as a kittlin's eye Balla was afther her climin'. My! that Pussy were skeered an' I was stan'in' un'er the three, an' I grip' her savadge an' the spittin' an' scratchin' at her was shockin'. We foun' tho' her were not all white. Balla an' me couldn' houl' the cat at all, so we give up an' lerrer go. My! we were that dun up an' tremenjous disappointed too.

Theere was paintin' goin' on at Mrs. Gearge's house an' Balla an' me sthole some whitewash an' a brush an' hid them in the lil' shed at the back. Then we thought on stealin' Sally an' paintin' her white. That Sally is a terribl' 'cute one fer all. It was only givin' her a tas' of herrin' that did the thrick. Balla was waitin' fur me, an' quiet like an' sof' we were carryin' Sally to the shed. My! theere was some spittin' an' scratchin' at her too, but I hel' on fas' as fas', an' Balla was paintin' an' paintin', an' she were that keerful too, not missin' one bit, so as Sally were all white when she were finish' paintin' her. My! she looked fine, too, for all yer wouldn' have knowed her at all. Our dhresses was tore an' splash, an' our han's were bleedy an' that sore, but theer was never a keer at us, fur we were thinkin' all the thime on them Turkey Nobs. We foun' a baskit an' Sally was put in at us, an' quiet like we wen' out lookin' as tho' nothin' had took place.

At las' her an' me foun' th' adhress, an' Balla was sayin':

"Min' I mus' be havin' half the five shillin', Mona."

The house we foun' was shockin' dhirty lookin' too.

"You be ringin' the bell, Mona," Balla was sayin', "an' I'll be houlin' the basket, an' min' yer asks fur them five shillin'."

So bol' like I rings. An' oul' mann with a crutch at him comed hobblin', sayin': "What are yer wantin'?"

"Her an' me have foun' the cat that was los' at yer, Misther," I was saying up an' out.

"Talk loud, gel, I have not heerd."

"Her an' me have foun' yer cat, Misther, an' have call fur the five shillin'," I was saying bol' an' loud. Liftin' his crutch, he shook it, shoutin': "Be off with yer an' sharp.

All them blessed childer has been ringin' an' bringin' cats. This is no Cats' Home, gel, I foun' our cat some thime now. Be off with yer an' middlin' sharp or I'll be callin' the perlice."

Och, my! how we runned, an' Balla, the stoopid, did dhrop the baskit, an' Sally jump out wild like, runnin' heer, theer, an' everywheer. Theer was nothin' lef' but go home, an' bad I was feelin' too. Me hans was that sore, me frock was that tore an' splash, an' no money at us ter buy them sweets, an the Bonnags los' at me—as leekly as not they were e't by them cats. I got scutch sore when I comed back.

That evernin' Mrs. Gearge came, sayin' Sally was los' at her, an' lookin' at Daa was askin': "Can yer make a suggession, Misther Boyd, why me Sally is missin'?"

"No, I can't think on nothin'," me Daa was sayin' sof' like, an' I was feelin' that quar too.

When she lef' Maa was askin' Daa: "Look now, John Thomas, have yer done summat to that theer cat?"

"Bless me sowl, wumman, I have never so much as put a sight in at her."

That night at firs' I couldn' sleep at all, at all. Then I'm supposin' I mus' hav' fur I was dhreamin' I was chasin' cats an' Mrs. Gearge was chasin' me an' Daa was chasin' Mrs. Gearge, an', my! how we runed an' runed jus' like them ones does at th' Picture Palace. Mrs. Gearge had jus' got houl' on me an' I woked cryin'.

The nex' marnin' Daa was sayin' he had res' fine as theer was no cat singin' that night. Me Maa was quiet like, frit she was, I'm thinkin'. I heerd Daa sayin': "Good marnin', Misthress Gearge, that theer Prodigal return' yet?" "No," she was answerin', "some one as I knows of could be throwin' a light on the mysterious doin's." But me Daa has spunk tremenjous, an' winkin' at me Maa, wen' an' lef' her. Turnin' on me Maa, her was sayin':

"Misther Boyd is lookin' tired, I'm thinkin'."

"Mrs. Gearge, if yer think me John Thomas is responsibil fur Sally yer mighty mistook; I kin tell yer he knowed nothin' about her."

"When I fin' the one as has took me Sally I'll have him or her purrin prison," Mrs. Gearge was sayin'.

Oh, them words. I was feelin' that bad. I fel' she mus' have knowed it were me for all.

That evernin' we heerd a bangin' an' a knockin' on the fron' dhure. I dursn't move an inch to rache the dhure. Me heart was beatin' an' throbin' an' me head was goin' roun' an' roun', an' sure it was the Terribl' One from nex' dhure, an' she hel' in her arms the los' Sally, who, when she seed me, was strugglin' an' strugglin' an' spittin'. Mrs. Gearge came straight up ter me an' says: "Theer is the one as sthole me Sally an' has done this paintin' to her, fur what I'm wonderin'. How wad ye like to be tarred, gel? you should be shook hard. Now don't be givin' me none o' yer lip."

"Come you here, Mona," me Maa was sayin', an' turnin' that cross on Mrs. Gearge, said: "It's not me Mona at all, it maybe is them painter men."

"It's Mona right enough, Mrs. Boyd, she should be gettin' a soun' thrashin' too. Look you at her han's all scratch. Her frock is all tore an' white. The guilt is prov' sure enough."

"Have you been doin' them wickad things, Mona?" me Daa was askin'.

"Yes," I was answerin' sof' like.

"Will yer be goin', please, Misthress Gearge, an' I'll see Mona gets a deservin' scutchin'," me Daa was sayin' cross like.

When the Terribl' One had went I tol' all an' how we had thried an' thried ter get them five shillin'. I got scutched sore, but I mus'n' forget ter tell yer I get thre'-punse a week now, though.

The Indoor Wasp*

By Henri Fabre

Of the several insects that elect to make their home in our houses, the most interesting, for the beauty of its shape, the singularity of its manners and the structure of its nests, is undoubtedly the Pelopæus, a Wasp hardly known even to the people whose fireside she frequents. Her solitary habits and her peaceful occupation of the premises account for the silence of history in regard to her. She is so retiring that her host is nearly always ignorant of her presence. Fame is for the noisy, the importunate, the noxious.

Let us try to rescue the modest creature from oblivion. An extremely chilly mortal, the Pelopæus pitches her tent under the kindly sun which ripens the olive and prompts the Cicada's song; and even then she needs for her family the additional warmth furnished by our dwellings. Her usual refuge is the peasant's lonely cottage, with its old fig-tree shading the well in front of the door. She chooses one exposed to all the heat of summer and, if possible, boasting a capacious fireplace to which a fire of sticks is no stranger. The cheerful blaze on winter evenings, when the sacred Yule-log burns upon the hearth, is largely responsible for her choice, for the insect knows by the blackness of the chimney that the spot is a likely one. A chimney that is not well glazed by smoke does not inspire confidence: the family must shiver with cold in that house.

During the dog-days in July and August the visitor suddenly appears, seeking a place for her nest. She is in no wise disturbed by the bustle and movement of the household: they take no notice of her nor she of them. Spasmodically she examines, now with her sharp eyes,

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now with her sensitive antennæ, the corners of the blackened ceiling, the rafters, the chimney-piece, the sides of the fireplace, in particular, and even the interior of the flue. Having finished her inspection and duly approved of the site, she flies away, soon to return with the little ball of mud which will form the first layer of the edifice.

The spot which she adopts varies greatly; often it is an extremely curious one, the one positive condition being that the temperature should be mild and equable. A furnace heat appears to suit the grubs of the Pelopæus; at least, the favourite place is the chimney, on either side of the flue, up to a height of twenty inches or so. This snug shelter has its drawbacks. The smoke gets to the nests, especially during the winter, when fires are going all day, and gives them a glaze of brown or black similar to that which adorns the stonework. They are so like it in appearance that they might well be taken for inequalities in the mortar which had been overlooked by the trowel. This swarthy tint is nothing to trouble about, provided that the flames do not come into contact with the cluster of cells. That would ensure the destruction of the larvæ, stewed to death in their clay pots. But this danger appears to be foreseen; and the Pelopæus entrusts her family only to chimneys which are too wide for anything but smoke to reach their sides; she is suspicious of the narrow ones which allow the brushwood-fire to fill the whole entrance to the flue.

In spite of her caution, one peril remains. While the nest is building, at a moment when the Wasp, urged by the need for laying her eggs, cannot bring herself to cease working, it sometimes happens that the approach to the dwelling is barred to her for a time, or even for the whole day, either by a curtain of steam rising from a stew-pan or by clouds of smoke from bad firewood. Washing-days are the most risky. From morning to night, the housewife keeps the huge cauldron boiling by means of all the odds and ends of the wood-shed: chips, bits of bark, leaves, fuel that burns with difficulty and intermittently. The smoke of the burning wood, the steam of the cauldron, the reek of the wash-tub form a dense mist with very few rifts in it. I have at rare intervals surprised the Pelopæus in the presence of some such obstacle.

It is told of the Water-ouzel, the Dipper, that, to get back to his nest, he will fly through the cataract under a mill-weir. The Pelopæus is even more daring: with her pellet of mud in her teeth, she crosses the cloud of smoke and disappears behind it, henceforth invisible, so thick is the screen. A spasmodic chirring, her working-song, alone betrays the mason at her task. The building rises mysteriously behind the cloud. The ditty ceases and the Wasp emerges from the steam-flakes, fit and well, as though coming out of a limpid atmosphere. She has faced the fire, like the fabled Salamander, and she will face it all day, until the cell is built, stuffed full of victuals and closed.

Cases of this kind occur too seldom to satisfy fully the curiosity of a seasoned observer. I should have liked to arrange the mist-screen myself and thus to try a few experiments bearing upon the dangerous crossing; but I was a stranger, a spectator by sheer chance; and all I could do was to trust to luck, without interfering with the washing operations and perhaps upsetting them. What a sorry idea the housewife engaged on that grave business would have had of my intelligence if I had ventured to touch her fire in order to worry a wasp! In the eyes of the peasant to occupy one's self with such small fry is a lunatic's game, the amusement of a feeble mind.

Once and only once fortune smiled upon me; but I was not ready to profit by it. The thing took place at my own house, by my own fireside and, as it happened, on a washing-day. I had not long been appointed to the Avignon grammar school. It was close upon two o'clock; and in a few minutes the roll of the drum would summon me to display the properties of the Leyden jar to an audience of wool-gatherers. I was preparing to go, when I saw a strange, agile insect, with a slender body and a gourd-shaped abdomen slung at the end of a long thread, dart through the reek rising from the wash-tub. It was the Pelopæus, whom I saw for the first time with observant eyes. A novice still and anxious to become better acquainted with my visitor, I fervently commended the insect to the watchful care of the household, begging them not to disturb it in my absence and to manage the fire in such a way as not to inconvenience it in its plucky work

of building the walls of its nest right beside the flame. My wishes were carried out religiously.

Things went better than I dared hope. On my return the Pelopæus was continuing her mason's-work behind the steam of the wash-tub, which stood under the mantel of a wide chimney. Eager as I was to watch the construction of the cells, to ascertain the nature of the provisions, to follow the evolution of the larvæ, all of them biological details entirely new to me, I took good care not to raise the experimental obstacles which I should not fail to set in the path of instinct to-day: a good nest was the sole object that I coveted. Therefore, so far from creating fresh difficulties for the Pelopæus, I did my utmost to reduce those which she had to overcome. I raked the fire, making it much smaller, so as to decrease the volume of smoke in the Wasp's building-yard; and for a good two hours I watched her diving through the cloud. Next day, the usual niggardly fire was burning intermittently; and there was nothing now to hamper the Pelopæus, who continued her work for some days and without further impediment completed the well-filled nest which was the object of my wishes.

Never again, in the forty years that followed, was my fireplace honoured with such a visit; and it was only by having recourse to the more fortunate hearths of my neighbours that I was able to glean my little bit of information. Nor was it until much later that, profiting by long experience, I had the idea of turning to account the predilection of so many Bees and Wasps for their birthplace and for founding a family in the neighbourhood of the nest where they receive, perhaps, the strongest of all impressions, the first dawn of light. I took Pelopæus-nests which I had collected more or less everywhere during the winter and fixed them up in such places in my present house as, judging by the sum total of my observations, I considered suitable, notably at the entrance to the chimney both of the kitchen and of the study. I put some in the embrasure of the windows, keeping the outside shutters closed to obtain the requisite sultriness; I stuck some to the dimly-lighted corners of the ceilings. It was in these sites of my choosing that the new generation was to hatch when the summer came; it was here that it would settle:

at least I thought so. Then I could have conducted in my own way the experiments which I had in mind.

My attempts invariably failed. Not one of my charges returned to the native nest: the less fickle of them contented themselves with brief visits, soon followed by a departure for good. The Pelopæus, it appears, is of a solitary and vagrant disposition: save in exceptionally favourable circumstances, she builds a lonely nest and is quite ready to change her locality from generation to generation. As a matter of fact, though this Wasp is fairly common in my village, her dwellings are nearly always scattered one by one, with no traces of any old nests near by. The place of her birth leaves no lasting recollection in the nomad's memory; and none comes to build beside the maternal hut.

For that matter, my want of success might well be due to another cause. The Pelopæus certainly is not rare in our southern towns; nevertheless, she prefers the peasant's smoky house to the townsman's white villa. Nowhere have I seen her so plentiful as in my village, with its tumbledown cottages guiltless of rough-cast and burnt yellow by the sun. My hermitage is not quite so rustic as that: it is a little neater and cleaner; and there is nothing to show that my visitors did not forsake my kitchen and my study, both too sumptuous in their opinion, to go and settle somewhere near in lodgings more to their taste. So the desired colonists, who were to have peopled my workroom, crammed with books, plants, fossils and entomological cemeteries, took their departure, scorning all that scientific luxury; they went away in search of some dim chamber with its solitary window sporting a sprig of wallflower in an old cracked stew-pot. Felicities like that are reserved for the humble; and I am therefore reduced to what I have gained by an occasional piece of good luck, irrespective of any efforts of mine. The little that I have seen, in one direction and another, is, after all, sufficient evidence of the pluck of the Pelopæus, who, to reach the nest built in a corner of the hearth, at times passes through a cloud of steam and smoke. Would she dare to cross a thin sheet of flame? That was what I had proposed to see, if my attempts to acclimatise her in my home had met with any success.

It is obvious that, in displaying a marked predilection for the chimney as her abode, the Pelopæus is not seeking her own comfort: the site chosen means work and dangerous work. She seeks the welfare of her family. This family, then, in order to prosper, must require a high temperature, such as is not demanded by the Mason-bees, for instance, who find sufficient shelter under a mortar dome or in the hollow of an exposed reed. Let us see what temperature the Pelopæus finds to her liking.

On the side-wall, under the chimney-piece, I hung a thermometer by the side of a Pelopæus-nest. During an hour's observation, with a fire giving out a moderate heat, it fluctuated between 85° and 104° F. This temperature, it is true, does not remain the same during the long larval period; on the contrary, it varies greatly, according to the season of the year and the time of day. I wanted something better and I found it on two occasions.

My first observation was made in the engine-room of a silk-factory. The back of the boiler reached nearly to the ceiling, the intervening space being barely twenty inches. It was against this ceiling, right above the huge cauldron, which was always full of water and steam at a high temperature, that the nest was fixed. At this spot the thermometer marked 120°. That degree of heat was maintained all through the year; it was only at night and on holidays that it decreased.

A country distillery furnished me with the second subject of my observation. It combined two excellent conditions for attracting Pelopæi: rural quiet and tropical heat. The nests, therefore, were numerous, fixed more or less everywhere on anything that came to hand, even down to a pile of account-books. One of these objects, standing quite close to the still, was tested with the thermometer. It measured 113° of heat.

These few data prove that the larvæ of the Pelopæus are comfortable in a temperature of a hundred degrees or over, a temperature not accidental, like that produced by a fire blazing in a chimney, but constant, such as that obtained by a steam-boiler or a still. Tropical heat is favourable to the grub slumbering for ten months in its mud home. Any seed, in order to sprout, needs a certain quantum of heat, greater or smaller according to its kind.

The larva, a kind of animal seed out of which the perfect insect will come by a germination even more wonderful than that which turns an acorn into an oak, the larva also claims its quantum of heat. The larva of the Pelopæus can cheerfully endure a temperature that makes the baobab or the oily palm-tree sprout. What, then, is the origin of this chilly tribe?

A good fire on the hearth, a boiler or a furnace producing the climate of the equator are useful windfalls, which, however, cannot be relied upon; the Pelopæus therefore settles in any lodging where she finds warmth and a not too garish light. The corners of a window with closed casement and shutters, provided that these furnish some exit-hole; the rafters of a loft, where the warmth of the daily quota of sunshine is preserved by the heaped-up hay and straw; the walls of a cottage bedroom : any of these suit her, so long as the larvæ find a snug shelter in winter. This climatological expert, the daughter of the dog-days, divines the coming peril for her family, that inclement season which she herself will never see.

While scrupulous in her choice of a warm spot, she is, on the other hand, supremely indifferent to the nature of the foundation on which the nest is fixed. As a rule, she attaches her groups of cells to the stone-work, whether rough-coated or not, and to the timber, whether bare or plastered; but she uses many other supports, some of which are very peculiar. Let us mention a few of these queer installations.

My notes speak of a nest constructed inside a gourd standing on the mantelpiece of a farm-kitchen. In this narrow-mouthed receptacle the farmer used to keep his shot. As the orifice was always open and the utensil not employed at that time of year, a Pelopæus had found that the peaceful retreat suited her and had gone to the length of building on the layer of small shot. The gourd had to be broken to extract the bulky edifice.

The same notes tell me of nests built against the pile of account-books in a distillery; in a fur cap relegated to the wall until the return of winter; in the hollow of a brick, back to back with the downy structure of a Cotton-bee; on the sides of a bag of oats; in a piece of lead tubing broken off an old water-pipe.

I saw something more remarkable still in the kitchen at Roberty, one of the principal farms near Avignon. It was a large room with a very wide fireplace, by which the soup for the farm-hands and the food for the cattle were simmering in a row of pots and pans. The labourers used to come in from the fields so many at a time, take their seats on benches round the table and devour the portions served out to them with the silent haste that denotes a keen appetite. To enjoy this half-hour of comfort they would take off their hats and smocks and hang them on pegs on the wall. Short though the meal was, it lasted long enough to allow the Pelopæi to inspect the garments and take possession of them. The inside of a straw hat was recognised as a most useful retreat; the folds of a smock were looked upon as a shelter that could be turned to excellent account; and the work of building started forthwith. On rising from table, one of the men would shake his smock, another his hat, to rid it of a heap of mud that was already the size of an acorn.

When the labourers had gone, I had a talk with the cook. She told me of her tribulations: those impudent insects were all over the place, dirtying everything with their filth. She was chiefly concerned with the window curtains. Dabs of mud on the ceiling, on the walls, on the chimney-piece you could put up with; but it was a very different matter when you found them on the linen and the curtains. To keep the curtains clean and dislodge the wretched things that persisted in bringing in their bits of mud, she had to shake them every day, to beat them with a bamboo. And it was all no use: next morning, work was resumed with equal vigour on the buildings destroyed the day before.

I sympathised with her sorrows, while greatly regretting that I could not myself take charge of the place. How gladly I would have left the Pelopæi alone, though they covered every scrap of upholstery with mud; how willingly I would have let them have their way, so that I might learn what prospects there are for a nest if perched on the shifting support of a coat or a curtain! The so-called Mason-bee of the Shrubs, heedless of the storm, builds on a twig; but her edifice, constructed of hard mortar, envelops the support, surrounds it on every side, becomes

firmly fixed to it. The nest of the Pelopæus is a mere mass of mud, fastened to its support without any special adhesive preparation. It has no hydraulic cement which sets as soon as used, no foundations welded to the supporting base. How can such a method give proper stability? The nests which I find on the rough canvas of corn-bags come off at the least shake, though the coarse mesh of the stuff makes it easier for them to stick on: what will happen when the nests are placed on a piece of fine calico hanging perpendicularly and often in motion, if only from the draught? To build on that strikes me as an aberration of instinct on the part of the architect, who has not yet learnt, in spite of the long lesson of the ages, how perilous are certain sites in human habitations.

Let us leave the constructor and occupy ourselves with the structure. The materials consist exclusively of wet earth, mud or dirt, picked up wherever the soil possesses the requisite degree of humidity. When there is a stream in the neighbourhood, the light clay of the banks is turned to account. But cement-works of this sort are rare or too far off in my stony region; and it is not in such a building-yard that I most frequently witness the gathering of the materials. I can watch the performance at my leisure without leaving my own garden. When a thin trickle of water runs from morning till evening in the little trenches out in the vegetable plots, a few Pelopæi, visitors to the neighbouring farms, soon get wind of the glad event. They come hurrying up to take advantage of the precious layer of mud, a rare discovery in this distressing time of drought. One selects a recently-watered furrow, another prefers to keep on the bank and settle in a work-yard moistened by capillary action. They scrape with their mandibles and skim off the gleaming, slimy surface while standing high on their legs, with wings aquiver and their black abdomen upraised on its yellow pedicel. No neat little housewife, with skirts carefully tucked up to keep her dress clean, could be more adept in tackling a job so antagonistic to the spruceness of her clothes. These mud-gatherers have not an atom of dirt upon them, so careful are they to tuck up their skirts in their own fashion, that is to say, to keep their whole body right out of the way, all but the ends of their legs and the busy tips of their mandibles. In this manner

a dab of mud is collected almost the size of a pea. Taking the load in its teeth, the insect flies off, adds a layer to its building and soon returns to collect another pellet. The same work is pursued as long as the earth remains sufficiently wet, during the hottest hours of the day, for there is always some builder about, looking for mortar.

But the most frequented spot is in front of the great fountain in the village. Here is a large trough, where the people round about come to water their mules. The constant trampling of the beasts of burden and the overflow of water make a perpetual expanse of black mud which neither the heat of July nor the mighty blast of the mistral succeeds in drying. This bed of mire, so unpleasant for the passers-by, is beloved by the Pelopæi, who meet there from every part of the neighbourhood. You seldom pass before the noisome puddle without seeing a few of them gathering their pellets amid the hoofs of the mules slaking their thirst.

The places exploited are enough in themselves to tell us that the mortar is collected ready-made, fit for immediate use without any further preparation than a vigorous kneading which gets rid of the lumps and makes the whole into a homogeneous mass. Other builders in clay, our old friends the Mason-bees, for instance, scrape up the dust on the highway and moisten it with saliva to convert it into a plastic material which will harden like stone by virtue of certain chemical properties of the salivary fluid. They set to work like the bricklayer, who mixes his mortar and his plaster by adding water in small quantities. The Pelopæus does not practise this art; the secret of chemical action is denied her; and the mud is employed just as it is picked up.

To make sure of this, I stole a few pellets from the busy collectors and, on comparing them with other pellets gathered in the same place and rolled by my own fingers, found no difference between them in appearance or in properties. The result of this comparison is confirmed by an examination of the nest. The structures of the Mason-bees are solid masonry, capable of resisting, without any protection, the prolonged action of rain and snow; those of the Pelopæi are flimsy work, devoid of cohesion and absolutely unfitted to withstand the vicissitudes of the

open air. A drop of water laid upon their surface softens the spot touched and reduces it to mud again, while a sprinkling equal to an average shower turns it into a liquid. They are nothing more than dried slime and become slime again as soon as they are wetted.

The thing is obvious: the Wasp does not improve the mud to make it into mortar; she uses it as it is. It is no less obvious that nests of this sort are not made for out-of-doors, even if the grub were not of such a chilly humour. A shelter that keeps them under cover is indispensable, otherwise they would go to pieces at the first shower of rain. This explains, apart altogether from questions of temperature, why the Pelopæus has a preference for human habitations, which afford the best protection against damp. Under the mantels of our chimneys she finds at one and the same time the heat required by the larvæ and the necessary dryness for the nests.

Before receiving its final coating, which conceals the structural details, the Pelopæus's edifice does not lack elegance. It consists of a cluster of cells, sometimes arranged side by side in one row—which gives the fabric something of the look of a set of pan-pipes with reeds all short and all alike in size—but more often grouped in a varying number of layers placed one above the other. In the most populous nests I count as many as fifteen cells; others contain only about ten; others again are reduced to three or four, or even to one alone. By numbering the cells one can tell how many journeys the Pelopæus has taken to her mortar. I count between fifteen and twenty. For one cell, therefore, the industrious builder fetches materials something like twenty times and perhaps even oftener, for one of these cushions of mud is not always, it seems to me, completed at a single sitting.

The main axis of the cells is horizontal, or nearly; the mouth is always turned upwards. And this must needs be so: a pot does not hold its contents save on condition that it be not upside down. The Pelopæus's cell is nothing more than a pot destined to receive the preserved foodstuffs, a pile of small Spiders. When laid horizontally or slanting a little upwards, the receptacle holds its contents; but with the mouth turned downwards it would lose them. I have lingered a moment

over this petty detail to call attention to a curious mistake current in the text-books. Wherever I find a drawing of a Pelopæus nest, I see it with the orifices of the cells facing downwards. The illustrations go on and on: to-day's reproduces the absurdities of yesterday's. I do not know who was the first to perpetrate this blunder and to think of subjecting the Pelopæus to a task no less arduous than that of the Danaides: to fill a pot turned upside down.

Built one by one, stuffed full of Spiders and closed according to the requirements of the laying, the cells retain their elegant frontage until the cluster is deemed large enough. Then, in order to fortify her work, the Pelopæus covers the whole with a protective coating; she lays on the plaster with an unsparing trowel, without artistry or any of those delicate and patient finishing touches which she lavishes upon the work of the cells. The pellet is applied just as it is brought and merely spread out with a few careless strokes of the mandibles. Thus the original beauties of the structure—the flutings between the cells set back to back, the corded cushions, the polished stucco—all disappear under a forbidding husk. In this final state the nest is nothing more than a shapeless protuberance; one would take it for a great splash of mud that had been flung against the wall by accident and dried there.

We find similar methods among the Mason-bees. The best mason among them, after she has erected her cells on a pebble, building them in the form of turrets daintily encrusted with bits of gravel, buries her artistic work under a clumsy plaster. Why do they both expend that finished workmanship, that fastidious care upon the frontage, when the masterpiece is doomed to disappear, deluged in mortar? We do not build a Louvre and then abandon its colonnades to the labourer's trowel. But we must not press the analogy too far. What do insects care about the beauty or ugliness of an edifice, provided that the larva be comfortably housed? With them we must be prepared for all the inconsistencies of the unconscious artist.

THE WAR OF LIBERATION

From a Journal (iii)

By May Sinclair

It is nearly two o'clock. Downstairs in the great, silent hall two British wounded are waiting for some ambulance to take them to the station. They are sitting bolt upright on chairs near the doorway, their heads nodding with drowsiness. One or two Belgian Red Cross men wait beside them. Opposite them, on three other chairs, three doctors sit also waiting for the ambulances to take them. They have been up all night and are utterly exhausted. They sit, fast asleep, with their heads bowed on their breasts.

Outside, the darkness has mist and a raw, cold sting in it.

A wretched ambulance wagon drawn by two horses is driven up to the door. It had a hood once, but the hood has disappeared and only the naked hoops remain. The British wounded from two other hospitals are packed in it in two rows. They sit bolt upright under the hoops, exposed to mist and to the raw, cold sting of the night; some of them wear their blankets like shawls over their shoulders as they were taken from their beds. The shawls and the head bandages give these British a strange foreign look, infinitely helpless, infinitely pitiful.

Nobody is out there but Mrs. Torrence and one or two Belgian Red Cross men. She and I help to get our two men taken gently out of the hall and stowed away in the ambulance wagon. There are not enough blankets. We try to find some.

At the last minute two bearers come forward, carrying a third. He is tall and thin; he is wrapped in a coat flung

loosely over his sleeping-jacket; he wears a turban of bandages; his long, bare feet stick out as he is carried along. It is Cameron, my poor Highlander, who was shot through the brain.

They lift him, very gently, into the wagon.

Then, very gently, they lift him out again.

This attempt to save him is desperate. He is dying.

They carry him up the steps and stand him there with his naked feet on the stone. It is anguish to see those thin, white feet on the stone. I take off my coat and put it under them.

It is all I can do for him.

Presently they carry him back into the hospital.

They can't find any blankets. I run over to the Hotel Cecil for my thick, warm travelling-rug to wrap round the knees of the wounded, shivering in the wagon.

It is all I can do for them.

And presently the wagon is turned round, slowly, almost solemnly, and driven off into the darkness and the cold mist, with its load of weird and piteous figures, wrapped in blankets like shawls. Their bandages show blurred, white spots in the mist, and they are gone.

It is horrible.

. . . . . .

Tom has come up with his first ambulance car. He is waiting for orders in the porch. His enormous motor goggles are pushed up over the peak of his cap. They make it look like some formidable helmet. They give an air of mastership to Tom's face. At this last hour it wears its expression of righteous protest, of volcanic patience, of exasperated discipline.

The Commandant is nowhere to be seen. And every minute of his delay increases Tom's sense of tortured integrity.

I tell Tom that he is to drive me at once to the Couvent de St. Pierre. He wants to know what for?

I tell him it is to fetch Miss Ashley-Smith and three British wounded.

He shrugs his shoulders. He knows nothing about the Couvent de Saint Pierre and Miss Ashley-Smith and three British wounded, and his shrug implies that he cares less.

And he says he has no orders to go and fetch them.

I perceive that in this supreme moment I am up against Tom's superstition. He won't move anywhere without orders. It is his one means of putting himself in the right and everybody else in the wrong.

And the worst of it is he *is* right.

I am also up against Tom's sex prejudices. I remember that he is said to have sworn with an oath that he wasn't going to take orders from any woman.

And the Commandant is nowhere to be seen.

Tom sticks to the ledge of the porch and stares at me defiantly. The servants of the hospital come out and look at us. They are so many reinforcements to Tom's position.

I tell him that the arrangement has been made with the Commandant's consent, and I repeat firmly that he is to get into his car this minute and drive to the Couvent de Saint Pierre.

He says he doesn't know where the Convent is. It may be anywhere.

I tell him where it is and he says again he hasn't got orders.

I stand over him and with savage and violent determination I say: "You've got them *now*!"

And, actually, Tom obeys. He says, "*All* right, all right, all right," very fast, and humps his shoulders and slouches off to his car. He cranks it up with less vehemence than I have yet known him bring to the starting of any car.

We get in. Then, and not till then, I am placable. I say, "You see, Tom, it wouldn't do to leave that lady and three British wounded behind, would it?"

What he says about orders then is purely by way of apology.

Regardless of my instructions, he does what I did and dashes up the wrong boulevard as if the Germans were even now marching into the *Place* behind him. But he works round somehow and we arrive.

They are all there, ready and waiting. And the Mother Superior and two of her nuns are in the corridor. They bring out glasses of hot milk for everybody. They are so gentle and so kind that I recall with agony my impatience when I rang at their gate. Even familiar

French words desert me in this crisis, and I implore Miss Ashley-Smith to convey my regrets for my rudeness. Their only answer is to smile and press hot milk on me. I am glad of it, for I have been so absorbed in the drama of preparation that I have entirely forgotten to eat anything since lunch.

The wounded are brought along the passage. We help them into the ambulance. Two, Williams and ——, are only slightly wounded; they can sit up all the way. But the third, Fisher, is wounded in the head. Sometimes he is delirious and must be looked after.

Then we say good-bye to the nuns.

The other ambulance cars are drawn up in the *Place* before the Flandria, waiting. For the first time I hate the sight of them.

We arrange for the final disposal of the wounded in one of the new Daimlers, where they can all lie down. Mrs. Torrence comes out and helps us. The Commandant is not there yet. Mrs. Torrence goes with the wounded.

I go into the hospital and upstairs to our quarters to see if anything has been left behind. If I can find Marie we must take her. There is room, after all.

But Marie is nowhere to be seen.

Nobody is to be seen but the Belgian night-nurses on duty, watching one on each landing at the entrance to her corridor. They smile at me gravely and sadly as they say good-bye.

I have left many places, many houses, many people behind me, knowing that I shall never see them again. But of all leave-takings this seems to me the worst. For those others I have been something, done something that absolves me. But for these and for this place I have not done anything, and now there is not anything to be done.

I go slowly downstairs. Each flight is a more abominable descent. At each flight I stand still and pull myself together to face the next nurse on the next landing. At the second storey I go past without looking.

. . . . . .

It is a quarter to three.

They are all ready now. The Commandant is there giving the final orders, and stowing away the nine wounded he has brought from Melle. The hall of the hospital is

utterly deserted. So is the *Place* outside it. And in the stillness and desolation our going has an air of intolerable secrecy, of furtive avoidance of fate. This Field Ambulance of ours abhors retreat.

It is dark with the black darkness before dawn.

And the Belgian Red Cross guides have all gone. There is nobody to show us the roads.

At the last minute we find a Belgian soldier who will take us as far as Ecloo.

The Commandant has arranged to stay at Ecloo for a few hours. Some friends there have offered him their house. The wounded are to be put up at the Convent. Ecloo is about half-way between Ghent and Bruges.

We start. Tom's car goes first with the Belgian soldier in front. Ursula Dearmer, Mrs. Lambert, Miss Ashley-Smith, and Mr. Riley and I are inside. The Commandant sits, silent, wrapped in meditation, on the step.

We are not going so very fast; not faster than the three cars behind us, and the slowest of the three (the *Fiat* with the hard tyres, carrying the baggage) sets the pace. We must keep within their sight or they may lose their way. But though we are not really going fast, the speed seems intolerable, especially the speed that swings us out of sight of the Flandria. You think that is the worst. But it isn't. The speed with its steady acceleration grows more intolerable with every mile. Your sense of safety grows intolerable.

You never knew that safety could hurt like this.

Somewhere on this road the Belgian Army has gone before us. We have got to go with it. We have had our orders.

That thought consoles you, but not for long. You may call it following the Belgian Army. But the Belgian Army is retreating, and you are retreating with it. There is nothing else you can do; but that does not make it any better. And this speed of the motor over the flat roads, this speed that cuts the air, driving its furrow so fast that the wind rushes by you like strong water, this speed that so inspired and exalted you when it brought you into Flanders, when it took you to Antwerp and Baerlaere and Lokeren and Melle, this vehement and frightful and relentless speed is the thing that beats you down and

tortures you. For several hours, ever since you had your orders to pack up and go, you have been working with no other purpose than this going; you have contemplated it many times with equanimity, with indifference; you knew all along that it was not possible to stay in Ghent for ever; and when you were helping to get the wounded into the ambulances you thought it would be the easiest thing in the world to get in yourself and go with them; when you had time to think about it you were even aware of looking forward with pleasure to the thrill of a clean run before the Germans. You never thought, and nobody could possibly have told you, that it would be like this.

We wait in the village at Ecloo while they find the Convent and take the wounded men there; we wait while the Commandant goes off in the dark to find his friend's house.

. . . . . .

Bruges.—We thought that the Belgian Army would be quartered in Bruges, and that we should find a hospital there and serve the Army from that base.

We took our wounded to the Convent, and set out to find quarters for ourselves in the town. We had orders to meet at the Convent again at a certain hour.

As it happened, we left Bruges, if anything, quicker than we had come in. The flat land fairly dropped away before our speed. I sat on the back step of the leading car, and I shall never forget the look of those ambulances, three in a line, as they came into sight scooting round the turns of the road to Ostend.

Besides the wounded we had brought from Ghent we took with us three footsore Tommies whom we had picked up in Bruges. They had had a long march. The stoutest, biggest, and most robust of these three fainted just as we drew up in the courtyard of the Kursaal at Ostend.

Ostend.—The Kursaal had been taken by some English and American women and turned into a hospital. It was filled already to overflowing, but they found room for our wounded for the night. Ostend was to be evacuated in the morning. In fact, we were considered to be running things rather fine by staying here instead of going on straight to Dunkirk. It was supposed that if the Germans were not yet in Bruges, they might be there any minute.

But we had had so many premature orders to clear out, and the Germans had always been hours behind time, and we judged it a safe risk. Besides, there were forty-seven Belgian wounded in Bruges, and three of our ambulance cars were going back to fetch them.

The expedition to Bruges returned safely with the forty-seven Belgian wounded.

We found rooms in a large hotel on the Digue, overlooking the sea. Before evening I went round to the hospital to see Miss Ashley-Smith's three wounded men. The Kursaal is built in terraces and galleries going all round the front and side of it. I took the wrong turning round one of them and found myself in the doorway of an immense ward. From somewhere inside there came loud and lacerating screams, high-pitched, but appallingly monotonous and without intervals. I thought it was a man in delirium; I even thought it might be poor Fisher, of whose attacks we had been warned. I went in.

I had barely got a yard inside the ward before a kind, little, rosy-faced English nurse ran up to me. I told her what I wanted.

She said, "You'd better go back. You won't be able to stand it."

Even then I didn't take it in, and said I supposed the poor man was delirious.

She cried out: "No! No! He is having his leg taken off."

They had run short of anæsthetics.

I don't know what I must have looked like, but the little, rosy-faced nurse grabbed me and said: "Come away. You'll faint if you see it."

And I went away. Somebody took me into the right ward, where I found Fisher and Williams and the other man.

Tuesday, 13th.—It is decided that I am to go with the Ambulance to Dunkirk, thence by train to Boulogne, thence to Folkestone. It sounds so simple that I wonder why we didn't think of it before.

But it was not by any means so simple as it sounded.

First of all we had to collect ourselves. Then we had to collect Dr. Hanson's luggage. Dr. Hanson was one of Mrs. St. Clair Stobart's women surgeons, and she had left

her luggage for Miss —— to carry from Ostend to England. There was a yellow tin box and a suit-case. Dr. Hanson's best clothes and her cases of surgical instruments were in the suit-case, and all the things she didn't particularly care about in the tin box. Or else the best clothes and the surgical instruments were in the tin box, and the things she didn't particularly care about in the suit-case. As we were certainly going to take both boxes, it didn't seem to matter much which way round it was.

Then there was Mr. Foster's green canvas kit-bag to be taken to Folkestone and sent to him at the Victoria Hospital there.

And there was a British Red Cross lady and her luggage —but we didn't know anything about the lady and her luggage yet.

We found them at the Kursaal Hospital, where some of our ambulances were waiting.

By this time the courtyard, the steps, and terraces of the hospital were a scene of the most ghastly confusion. The wounded were still being carried out and still lay, wrapped in blankets, on the terraces; those who could sit or stand sat or stood. Ambulance cars jostled each other in the courtyard. Red Cross nurses dressed for departure were grouped despairingly about their luggage. Other nurses, who were not dressed for departure, who still remained superintending the removal of their wounded, paid no attention to these groups and their movements and their cries. The hospital had cast off all care for any but its wounded.

Women seized hold of other women for guidance and instruction, and received none. Nobody was rudely shaken off—they were all, in fact, very kind to each other—but nobody had time or ability to attend to anybody else.

Somebody seized hold of the Commandant and sent us both off to look for the kitchen and for a sack of loaves which we would find in it. We were to bring the sack of loaves out as quickly as we could. We went off and found the kitchen, we found several kitchens; but we couldn't find the sack of loaves, and had to go back without it. When we got back, the lady who had commandeered the sack of loaves was no more to be seen on the terrace.

While we waited on the steps somebody remarked that

there was a German aeroplane in the sky and that it was going to drop a bomb. There was. It was sailing high over the houses on the other side of the street. And it dropped its bomb right in front of us, above an enormous building not fifty yards away.

We looked, fascinated. We expected to see the building knocked to bits and flying in all directions.

The bomb fell. And nothing happened. Nothing at all.

. . . . . .

We may have thought that we were following the retreat of the Belgian Army when we went from Ghent to Bruges. We were, in fact, miles behind it, and the regiments we overtook were stragglers. The whole of the Belgian Army seemed to be poured out on to that road between Ostend and Dunkirk. Sometimes it was going before us, sometimes it was mysteriously coming towards us, sometimes it was stationary, but always it was there. It covered the roads; we had to cut our way through it. It was retreating slowly, as if in leisure, with a firm, unhasting dignity.

Every now and then, as we looked at the men, they smiled at us, with a curious still and tragic smile.

And it is by that smile that I shall always remember the look of the Belgian Army in the great retreat.

EDITORIAL NOTE.—Miss Sinclair writes in connection with a footnote, page 309, of the June number, that it is open to misconstruction. The fact is that Miss Ashley-Smith did not leave the patient referred to, and could not have left him, seeing that he was not in any sense her patient at the time. Nor was Miss Ashley-Smith a member of the Motor Field Ambulance Corps. She had no connection with it beyond that accident of war. All this is clearly stated in the Journal to be published later.

The Journey Home

By A. H. M.

While the men were entrenching themselves I espied a farm-building across a field. With an eye to a hot dinner when all was quiet for the night I went across to investigate, passing on the way two objects under layers of straw which on examination proved to be dead cows killed by gun-fire and buried by their owner in this rather summary fashion. The farm itself appeared deserted, but on going into an inner room I found two figures huddled in darkness over the stove. We greeted each other simultaneously with "Who are you?" Then the figures sprang to attention, and one said: "Beg pardon, Sir, didn't see who it was." "Who are you?" I asked. "It's Jones and Hodges, Sir." "Oh," I said, not very well pleased. Jones and Hodges were the two Company stretcher-bearers. They were not, strictly speaking, supposed to be digging themselves in like the other men of the Company, for their work lay here, there, and everywhere, and, of course, they had no right to go and make themselves comfortable for the night in a farm.

"'Ave a cup of tea, Sir?" Jones held out a tin cup.

The mug was thrust into my hand. I took a pull and passed it back again, sweet, strong, excellent.

"No, Sir, you finish that—we've got plenty 'ere." He pointed to a canteen simmering on the stove.

"'Ave a seat, Sir?" Hodges pulled a stool in front of the stove. There is no more inimitable host in the world than Thomas Atkins.

"Will you have one?" I said, pulling out my cigarette case and passing it across.

"Thankee, Sir, 'aven't 'ad a smoke to-day, Sir."

He bent down and lit his cigarette at the stove, sucked at it and passed it to his pal.

The talk turned on the duties of stretcher-bearers,

which were not so easy as many people thought. Jones was particularly aggrieved because a sergeant in the Company that morning had told him he was a loafer and a shirker. "What it comes to," he said, "is, because we don't use rifles, they expect us to do every nasty job going, taking up ammunition, fetching away wounded, 'opping about outside the trench the 'ole time when everybody else has got their 'eads down."

I mollified them a little by saying I was sure they always did their work admirably, and anyway, if I was ever hit, I should feel quite happy if I knew they were near. We sat on chatting round the stove and smoking for some while, and then an orderly came in to say the Company had had orders to move. I buckled up my belt and, feeling rather guilty myself about having sat so long in the farm, dashed back across the field. It was pitch dark, and I went head over heels over some large object, at the same time nearly impaling myself on a sharp point. Apostrophising the cow and the farmer's method of burying it, I picked myself up and continued. . . .

"Stretcher-bearer! 'ere, pass the word for the stretcher-bearer—the orficer been hit." The man into whose dug-out I'd rolled helped me off with my putties and ripped open the first-aid bandage which I'd carried in my coat all these weeks and had at last found a use for. With the aid of the simple instructions we had been taught it was easy enough to apply the bandage, and no sooner had this been done than I heard a voice I recognised say: "Where's Mr. ——?" and the faces of Jones and Hodges appeared over the trench.

"Got it bad, Sir?" the latter asked. "'Ere, Bill—you take 'is shoulders and I'll take 'is legs—mind 'is feet." They lifted me out of the trench on to a stretcher.

"Is it all right down that road?" I asked as they started off.

"Yessir, we'll get you along all right, don't you worry."

The road hadn't been all right by any means five minutes before; however, I supposed they knew best, and was by no means sorry myself to be taken a little further away from the Germans in my then condition. Poor Jones, who was leading, began to totter visibly under my thirteen stone half way to the dressing-station. However, he struggled

on, and as soon as they'd deposited me off the pair went again for a fresh load, and so on right through the day, under fire all the time. How stretcher-bearers live as long as they do considering the conditions they work under is one of the problems of modern warfare. The answer, I'm afraid, is, "Many don't." . . .

"Oh, Gawd! Oh ——! ——ooh!!"

"Shut up, can't yer?" a man shouted from the far corner of the room.

"I've got a 'ole in me big enough to put yer 'and in," the sufferer explained, and began again to groan and swear.

"Got a cigarette, mate?" A man deathly pale on a stretcher held out his hand to a comrade who was slightly wounded and standing beside him. The latter extricated a Woodbine from a crumpled packet and passed it down. The man on the stretcher lit the cigarette and puffed at it phlegmatically. It was doubtful whether he would live, and though he did not know this, he knew he must not have anything to eat or drink for many hours.

About fifteen or twenty of us were lying on the floor of a cottage. Outside, four or five hundred yards up the street, a lively fight was in progress for the possession of the village. After the firing line the cottage seemed a haven of peace and safety.

"Hullo, they've got you."

"Morning, Doctor."

A young fellow, fresh from his training at a hospital, was standing beside me. He was our regimental doctor, and I'd always thought of him as a lucky fellow who rode on a horse when we were on the march, got his rations regularly at all times, and during a scrap enjoyed the security of the extra few hundred yards which he was supposed to have between his dressing-station and the firing line. Well, here he was to look after me, anyhow.

"Got a bit of work to do to-day, Doctor," I said as he bound me up.

"Yes," he answered, adjusting a blanket as a pad under me, "there, just keep in that position and the bleeding will soon stop." He turned to the man next me.

"I've got some across the way, too," he said, as the orderly handed him fresh bandages. "They've been

shelling the poor beggars, knocking all the slates off the roof."

As he spoke some shrapnel crashed against the roof of our cottage, sending a few tiles rattling to the ground. The doctor looked up.

"I think we're all right here," he said. "We've got a double roof. I always try to pick a cottage with a double roof. But those poor devils over the way are getting awful scared; I think I'll slip across to them."

The bit of road he had to "slip across" was catching most of the shells which the cottage did not, and was also the channel for a steady stream of rifle and machine gun fire. I began to see there wasn't much in it, whether one was a doctor or a platoon commander.

More especially did I realise a doctor's difficulties when, later in the day, just as our doctor had finished looking at my dressings, a message came that the field dressing-station belonging to the regiment on our left had been set alight by a shell. He hastily organised a party of stretcher-bearers and orderlies and went off at once. Later he came back. He said it had been terrible to see the wounded lying helpless in the barn waiting for the flames, but somehow they had managed to rescue all and move them to a safer place, though the whole operation had to be carried out under rifle and shell fire. Each time a regiment is seriously engaged with the enemy at least 100 men are hit, often four times the number. The regimental doctor is supposed to bind up each one of these, and often when times are slack and a stray man here or there gets hit he will be sent for to come up to the trenches.

"'Allo, Jock," loud greetings were shouted by everyone in the room to a little man standing in the doorway with a bandolier across his chest and rifle with bayonet still fixed. He was a grubby little fellow, with blood and mud caked all down his cheek, ragged clothes, and—as I had seen as he came up the cottage steps—a pronounced limp. It was Private Mutton, scalliwag, humourist, and well-known character in the regiment.

"Yus, they got me," he said in answer to inquiries, "fro' me calf," he pointed to his leg, "and right acrost the

top of me 'ead"—he raised his cap and showed where a bullet had parted his hair, grazing the scalp. "But I give the bloke somethink what did it." Private Mutton grinned at his bayonet. "Got 'im fair, right fro' 'is stomick."

I could not help feeling delighted, for I recognised in the muddy, gory, highly pleased with himself little man the original of Thomas Atkins, of whose doings along the Indian frontier I had read thrilling accounts by Mr. Kipling, and whose quaint mannerisms I had often laughed at as represented on the stage of music-halls at home. . . .

The horse ambulance took us back some three miles to the field ambulance, where we spent the night after being given some food and tea and having our wounds dressed. The accommodation was rough, just some straw on the floor, but to feel there were three miles between ourselves and the enemy gave one quite a feeling of being rested. At these field ambulances the work of dressing the wounded goes on incessantly day and night, and it is here that many a case of lockjaw or gangrene is prevented by the timely application of antitetanus injection or iodine. Among the wounded was a young German boy, not more than eighteen years old. The other wounded Tommies and the orderlies were very good to him, making quite a pet of the boy and giving him tea and cigarettes and asking him what he thought about the war. He had only had six weeks' training before being sent into the firing line, and was a gentle enough creature, bewildered by the fierce struggle into which he had been thrown.

In the morning a fleet of motor ambulances came to take us to the clearing hospital at rail-head. Most of these ambulances were private cars fitted up at their owners' expense and driven in many cases by the owners too. Only those who have been wounded and travelled in a Government horse ambulance can appreciate the good work done by these volunteer Red Cross workers and their cars. After the lumbering horse vehicle rubber tyres and the well-hung body of a private car are an unspeakable relief to broken bones. Our driver was a young fellow who looked as though he had just left Oxford or Cambridge.

He drove us very slowly and carefully over the twelve miles of bumpy road, and took us straight to the station in time to have us put on a hospital train which was leaving that morning for the base. How often at the beginning of the war on my way up to the Front had I seen these hospital trains go by and wondered—with a very pious hope that it might be so—if it would ever be my lot to take a passage in one. In those days as now everyone knew that it was only a question of time before they were killed or wounded—few last long enough to become diseased—and to be stowed safely away in a hospital train labelled for England was the best fate that could befall anyone.

It was, then, with a feeling of supreme contentment that I allowed myself to be laid along the seat of a first-class carriage and propped up behind with a great coat and a pillow. On the opposite seat was a young gentleman not nearly so contented. He had been hit in the shoulder. He said his wound was hurting him; that he was not comfortable on the seat of the carriage; and that he considered tinned stew (which had just been brought us) a very nasty luncheon. I thought him a peevish and graceless cub and, when he snapped at the orderly who came to clear away lunch, rebuked him.

I said that he ought to be thankful for being where he was at all; that his wound was nothing compared to those of others in the train; that his whining and peevishness brought discredit on his uniform and regiment; and that he ought to be ashamed of himelf for making such a fuss. As he was a second lieutenant just fresh from Sandhurst and I was an elderly subaltern of several years' service he did not argue with me, but looked at the floor, while I scowled at him from time to time across the carriage.

Eventually the train started and we began our journey to Boulogne. We had been told it would take about nine hours, and so prepared to make ourselves as comfortable as possible and sleep. Except for a visit from the doctor to ask if we wanted anything, and from a hospital nurse, nothing much happened for the rest of the day. The visit from the hospital nurse is one of the things I remember most clearly from an otherwise clouded period. It was the first taste of the infinite sympathy and solicitude which

women give to men returned from the war. All who have experienced it—as every wounded man has in abundant measure—must have felt that anything he has suffered was worth such a reward.

After the visit from the hospital nurse we had some dinner and settled down for the night. About this time I began to notice that the blanket which had been folded in four and placed under my injured leg was slightly rucked at the corner. I could not reach it to adjust it myself and after the scene with my stable mate did not like to ask his assistance. Presently an orderly came by and I called him in to put it right. Half-an-hour later the same thing happened again and I had to call in another orderly. The little subaltern, who was dozing, opened one eye and looked at me reproachfully, but said nothing. Later, when the train pulled up with a jerk which nearly threw us off our seats, we both groaned softly, and when it did the same thing again I swore, and received a grateful look from the rebuked grumbler. In fact, to shorten the story, by noon the next day, when we were finally taken out of the train, I was half hysterical with pain, discomfort, and fatigue, and the little subaltern had nearly forgotten his troubles in his efforts to adjust my blankets with his sound arm and running to and fro fetching the orderly: the moral of this story needs no pointing. . . .

At Boulogne we were taken by motor ambulance to one of the base hospitals. This hospital was a marvellous example of efficient emergency organisation. Three days before it had been an hotel; and in this space of time—*i.e.*, three days—the entire building had been converted into a thoroughly modern hospital with wards and operating theatre. Most of the work had been done by the members of the hospital staff themselves, and, as we were taken in, the last bits of hotel furniture were still standing in the hall waiting to be removed.

By this time I was rather exhausted, and I cannot remember more than a matron in a dark silk dress with a very gentle, pretty face bending over me and asking me if I was comfortable, and my replying in a voice that was little above a whisper that it was good to be in bed. I think she said, too, something to the nurse about "not putting him to bed like that." I had been in the same

clothes for a fortnight and they were very muddy, and I remember having my breeches cut off and being helped into a flannel night-shirt. I woke later to find a nurse beside me with a basin of water. "Would you like to wash?" she asked. I gazed at her apathetically. "Come on then, I'll do it for you," she said kindly. She dipped a piece of flannel in the basin and rubbed it gently over my face. Then she took one of my hands and rubbed that; then streaks of white appeared down my fingers as the caked mud was cleared. "There, I think that is all we'll do for the present," she said, and feeling beautifully clean —though in reality with ten days' beard and looking perfectly filthy—I lay back on the pillow.

After tea I sat up, accepted a cigarette from my neighbour, and took stock of the rest of the ward.

In the bed on my right was a man with a bandaged head; he had an orderly beside him and was dictating a letter. He was evidently feeling very weak, for he spoke with an obvious effort. The letter was about some lost baggage, and dictated with the utmost precision and detail. He ended by saying signed "James Brown, Captain and Adjutant"; and I couldn't help smiling, for it was so like an Adjutant to dictate a precise letter about some lost baggage, but it seemed so funny for him, weakened by his wounds as he was, to be lying there in bed doing it, and I felt sure it was more from force of habit than anything else.

At eight o'clock the day-sister made a round of the wards with the night-sister, handing over her patients till the next day. The night-sister was followed by a sort of understudy who, I remember, was tall and thin with rather a long nose. This understudy, who was referred to as "nurse" by the other two, was, I gathered, a sort of probationer, and not allowed to take much responsibility on herself.

By ten the ward was in darkness except for one green-shaded light, and I think I must have dozed a little, for I remember looking up suddenly to see the night-sister's understudy standing at the foot of my bed gazing at me with a puzzled expression. Seeing me open my eyes she stretched out her arm and pulled towards her a glass-topped table with a bowl of dressings on it. Then she

studied me again. I was still half asleep and watched her with half-closed eyes.

"Is it your *feet*?" she asked.

I nodded.

She lifted the bedclothes back from the foot of the bed and surveyed my bandaged feet for a minute or two. Then with a sudden air of determination she bent down and, catching my right foot by the big toe, lifted it deftly off the pillow on which it was resting. I gave one piercing scream which woke the whole ward and brought the night-sister running in. For the rest of the night I lay with one eye peeping over the sheet prepared to yell for help at the top of my voice if the young lady assistant came near my bed. The next day she returned to England for further instruction.

The following afternoon I was operated on and the bullet extracted from my ankle. A sergeant brought it me wrapped in cotton-wool and left me feeling quite reassured about the success of the operation. . . .

I remember very well on the way up to the Front seeing a hospital ship leave one of the base ports. She was a beautiful looking vessel, painted white, with a great red cross painted on either side amidships. That hospital ship certainly looked comfortable, and I don't mind admitting that, at the time, I wished most heartily I was on board her with my job done instead of having to go up to the firing line and do it. The wounded men on board all looked so happy and comfortable.

However, everything comes to him who waits—nothing more quickly than a bullet in these sanguinary days—and after a week at the base hospital at Boulogne I was given a ticket marked "cot case" and told I was going to be put on board a hospital ship for England. I smiled gratefully at the doctor, tied the ticket round my neck, put on a woollen waistcoat, muffler, and dressing gown (all presented to me by the hospital) over my pyjamas, and waited my turn to be carried downstairs. In due course, with three others, I was taken in a motor ambulance to the ship, and from thenceforward was in the charge of the naval authorities.

We were carried up the gangway on our stretchers and placed on a sort of luggage lift which in the twinkling of

an eye transported us below, where we were lifted on to swinging cots arranged in a large saloon. The quick, handy way in which everything was done was typical of the Navy, and having once spent six weeks on board a battleship, I felt quite at home again. Dinner was brought round soon after getting on board, and I ate soup, fish, roast mutton, and apple tart with the heartiest of appetites. Unfortunately, also, in the happiness of the moment, I drank a large bottle of bass which seriously affected my slumbers during the night.

We did not leave until the following night, arriving at Plymouth at nine o'clock the next morning. However, it was no hardship to be aboard the hospital ship .

The cots were just as comfortable as beds; there was every appliance for dressing our wounds, and the nurses and doctors looked after us indefatigably. In such surroundings aspects of the war which are taken more seriously elsewhere are made light of. The patients made jokes about each other's wounds and their own, and all were so glad to be alive that pain and suffering were almost forgotten. There was one fellow in the cot next to mine who in the middle of a silence suddenly uttered an exclamation of annoyance. Asked what was the matter, he said he wanted to know the time and had just discovered he had lost his watch. It was a wrist watch, he explained, and must have been left on the arm they had amputated at the field ambulance.

At Plymouth we were taken on board a launch and landed at a quay close by the naval hospital. The ingenious cots devised by the Navy enable a wounded man to be moved bodily in his bed, all wrapped up and warm, to the bed in the hospital. They are so made that they can either be carried as stretchers, or slung from a ship's side, or put on hand-trolleys and wheeled. The Naval Hospital at Plymouth is a model of neatness and smartness, each patient in the officers' quarters gets a small room to himself which is called a cabin; the orderlies are all ex-sailors and handy and obliging as only sailors can be; and the naval nurses in their smart blue uniforms are a pleasure to watch.

I stayed at Plymouth for five days, when I was allowed to travel to London.

Politics

By Austin Harrison

The career of the Hungarian, Ignatius Lincoln, ex-M.P. for Darlington, constitutes a romance in comparison with which the cobbler of Koepenick was a vulgar tyro. I am not concerned with his espionage, though no doubt this was considerable; nor with the fact that he was sent by Mr. Seebohm Rowntree to "investigate social conditions" on the Continent; the phenomenon lies in this foreign adventurer's vagary in the House of Commons.

There was no difficulty about it. Coming to this country penniless and "wanted by the police," he quickly gauged the potentialities of English political life. Naturally, he became a Liberal; joined the National Liberal Club, and in 1910 defeated Mr. Pike Pease, who had the disadvantage of being an Englishman, at the polls, receiving for this good service to the cause of Party congratulatory telegrams from Sir E. Grey, Mr. Herbert Samuel, Mr. Runciman, Mr. McKenna, and others. He was never able to speak English well or correctly, but that did not matter. He represented the Liberal Idea—good enough. He was a stout Party man. And so this astonishing gentleman of fortune soars into our public life eminently respectable, and doubtless regarded by the Party Whips and Thugs as a bulwark of British decorum. He once wore the cloth. He dallied with Quaker views. In fine, he possessed all the qualities we hypocritically associate with our public men, and when war broke out he gets a pleasant job in the Censorship.

The moral of this rogue goes to the root of what we call Politics, and is the cause of our existing troubles. In no other country, off the stage, would such a career be possible. No Englishman, whether gaol-bird or recidivist, for example, could migrate to France and enter the *Chambre*, or flee to Germany and become elected to the

Reichstag because of his espousal of an idea or principle or political plank, for the simple reason that neither the French nor the Germans are such incorrigible simpletons. Here, as we know, the German question has for years been a Party question. The man who ventured to point out the German danger became at once anathema to Liberalism. The man who said Germany was our friend was immediately hailed as a good Democrat.

We know from their speeches that the late Government, individually and collectively, were dead wrong about Germany—we know also that they are honourable men. The German question, however, was not a matter of honour, but of knowledge with which politics, alas! are not necessarily concerned. And this truth the Hungarian, Isaac Trebitsch, deftly got hold of.

He realised, long before he could speak our language, that politics were largely a game of bluff and humbug, and that, provided that the outward forms of a man were orthodox and respectable, it was an easy job for a clever and audacious trickster to become an eminent member of English society. One can see him thinking it all out in his lodging-house at Whitechapel, having tumbled on the grand discovery that hypocrisy will carry a man into Parliament if only he is hypocritical enough and he plays the game according to the rigour of our British institutions.

The cloth covers a multitude of sins—so the astute Isaac gets appointed curate of Appledore in Kent. I picture the fellow in the pulpit, with his homilies in pidgin-English, no doubt edifying the good folk of Appledore with his earnestness and divinity. H. G. Wells never reached the summit in fiction of that scoundrel's romance. I can hear him, as he bends over the pulpit with folded hands, solemnly gurgling to his congregation—"Let us pray." I can see him grinning in his cassock, thinking what damned fools we English are. Then the next step in the social scale.

He "devils" for Mr. Seebohm Rowntree. Here he does social, sociological work; doubtless coquettes with Fabianism, with the "clever young men" who would run the country on parables, but again he gets bored. He has gone up by now. The goal is Westminster.

No difficulty whatever. He becomes naturalised as easily as he would toss down a glass of sherry, and opens his political campaign. I am sure he descanted on the German problem, the monstrous lies of journalists who wrote about battleships and Pan-Germans. Again I can see him, with his energetic and "spiritual" face, retailing the *clichés* of our domestic politics, while excited mobs of bumpkin electors suck in the platitudes. Isaac on the hustings must have felt like Caruso on the night of his first great success.

"Gentlemen, friends, countrymen, it is a great pleasure for me to stand among you to-day in this bitter hour of Britain's anguish. The land is in danger. Your principles are at stake. The ideals for which you have fought and died are threatened—(loud applause). Ah! gentlemen, I rejoice you are with me, that you respond to the call of country. For what do I stand for? Dreadnoughts?—(No, and laughter). No, friends, I stand for peace, for fair wages, for good beer, for the noble idea of Democracy—(continuous applause). They tell you the Germans are preparing to attack this fair Island. Don't believe it—(rapturous shouts, a stout farmer shouts: "Give it them, Sir"). It's a lie and nothing but a lie. The Germans are the kindest people in Europe. I know them. I have lived among them—(sensation and some murmurs). And I can tell you this: *The Kaiser is Britain's friend*—(Bravo, laughter and murmurs). We true Englishmen know it. We are not going to be boosted by a gang of soldiers who would militarise this happy Island. We want peace. We believe in peace. We mean to have peace—(loud and long applause). Gentlemen, if you elect me I shall work for you and pray for you—Yes, I was once a Minister of the Church. Your ideas are mine, and I speak from the root soil of Great Britain. I say, trust us. I say, send me to Westminster, send me . . ."

And so on. The saws please, and so on January 15th, 1910, the constituency sends him to Westminster, while Mr. Pike Pease is handed the "lemon," and on February 23rd the spy M.P. makes his "maiden" speech.

Can anything be more absurd? Can any greater travesty of political life be conceived? Can exposure of the futility, the hypocrisy, the cant and immorality of our

politics be more complete? Is not this confession of political success a scandal which shames our whole public life? And apart from that, is it not a national or military madness?

Even the wildest altruist and sciolist must admit that plainly something is rotten in the State that such things can happen, that a foreign adventurer can come to these shores and get elected to the Mother of Parliaments; nor can any clear-thinking man doubt but that the reason is Politics, which corrode and obfuscate our national sense. Numbers of men realised this state of affairs long before the war. Our satirists have fleshed their wit on its carcase. Before the war, indeed, it was a common thing to hear men say: "O, don't talk about politics," or "For heaven's sake, don't get on to politics," and the reason was that men and women who thought clearly and finely had grown exasperated with the extrinsic and intrinsic hypocrisy of the game of catchwords and thimble-rig.

Government in this country being the expression of the majority, it follows automatically that we have no Government in the strict sense of the term; for authority which rests on consent, measured and determined in all positive application by the strength of dissent, can obviously exercise no real authority; nor is it supposed to. As Mr. Asquith cynically defined it, Government consisted in "Wait and see." The definition of Government is thus opinion or rule by popularity. Admirable and possibly exemplary as such a constitutional condition is on an Island in time of peace, in war it is demonstrably the reverse, because rule by option is the negation of organisation, system, and discipline which are the three indispensable determinants of modern warfare.

Now, had the good burghers of Appledore in Kent been less ingenuous, less ignorant and insular, they would have resented the appointment of a foreigner to their curacy; and had they known anything about foreign politics and the German spy system, most assuredly they would have ejected this impostor for all the honour he conferred upon the cloth. But they did not know. Or rather, they could not know because the politicians they voted for told them that Germany was their friend, and Utopia was to be the next political surprise. And had the

electors of Darlington had any true *national* sense and any true prospective of war and its responsibilities, certainly they, too, would have chosen some plain, blunt Englishman in preference to a foreigner, however dandy or democratic, whose antecedents were unknown to them. And had the late Government not lost all sense of national duty and actuality in the anæsthesia of political theory and insularity, they, also, would never have congratulated a rascal and a spy for defeating an Englishman at the polls. So much may be assumed. They are honourable men. We are all honourable men. But lawyers and politicians are not necessarily statesmen; as we know, when war broke out, they were as painfully surprised as they were unready.

Our politicians were wrong for the same reason that caused the Church to anoint Mr. Isaac and Westminster to cheer him—*politics*, the grand game of thinking insularly. When Ignatius Lincoln came to this Island to make a career, he had no politics in him; but his vision was sure; he could see clearly and think clearly, and the first thing he found out was that few people in Britain thought nationally at all. This was his chance. He said to himself: "Strange, no man here apparently dreams that the Continent exists, that Germany has an Army, that Britain herself has military responsibilities towards her Ally, that anything matters except the particular political beliefs obtaining in this little Island." And Ignatius thought rightly. We did so reason. Whether in art, or thought, or science, or military affairs, Europe for us did not count. The elector voted for the man who shared his insular prejudices and opinions. The politician told him Lord Roberts was a militarist and so a fool, and the elector believed him; preferred, in short, Mr. Lincoln with his Party mouth-organ, who pandered to the insular gullibility. The "We British" of a foreigner was far more effective than the tragic figure of our greatest soldier stumping the country in his old age on behalf of national common-sense, because, while the politician and foreigner told the people what they wanted to think, the patriot told them what he thought as a soldier and a man. The difference is the exact explanation of our national blindness, and the exact hollowness of our politics.

It blinded us before the war; it blinds us to-day. The Government fell because of it, but still we are caught and strangled in its coils. In the eleventh month of the war we begin to realise that the war is more serious than we had thought, and that perhaps we are not "taking it seriously enough." We have also made another discovery —that purely voluntary or casual effort is not sufficient. The alternative is organisation, discipline—things we abominate and hold to be un-English, and yet we are gradually coming to see that organisation and discipline there will have to be. But it is difficult. It jars with our principles, our theories, our ideas. The country is run on the principle of free economic competition, which means profits on the one hand and rebellious labour on the other. They clash. They are political polarities. Here, the "bosses" compete, there, the Trades Unions. Old opponents politically, they strike at one another economically. And so it goes on, and must go on as long as we continue trying to meet the extraordinary conditions and needs of European war by the ordinary conditions and nostrums of peace, and refuse to adjust ourselves to the necessities.

Ignatius Lincoln could have told us that, for, as a Hungarian, he knows. To-day he might make a fine patriotic speech in the House on the subject, telling us that our rules and peace-time shibboleths are fatal to national effort and co-operation, and that if we really want to beat his countrymen the best thing we can do is to imitate his machine. He could tell us that compulsion is regarded by his countrymen as the discipline of nationality, without which no people can hope to fight at full strength. He could explain this lucidly and sincerely, buttering us up with reference to our "surplus ships" in the Dardanelles which, if they were not so employed, would be "lying idle in our ports." About the hypocrisy of our objection to discipline, he might wax sarcastic. All Party political life, he could explain, is disciplinarian; terribly so to aspiring members who dare to have opinions and wish to ventilate them. Without discipline, no business. Every clerk in the City knows that. Why rebel? he might ask. Ireland? "Did any Right Honourable member say Ireland? Well, look at Hungary. We hate the Prussians, but we are all fighting together, working together and

thinking together, because we know the value of discipline and organisation, and we don't mean to be defeated."

Ignatius Lincoln might even make a pun, for he is a card as well as a politician: "*Pas de Suisse, pas de Calais*," and being a member of Parliament his *mot* would be repeated all over the country. He would be interviewed; the hon. member for Darlington would expand:—

"Take spies, or cotton. Nobody in England knows that cotton is used for explosives, otherwise the Government would never have allowed Germany to import cotton for ten months after war had been declared. As for spies, they are an integral part of the German war machine. There are spies all over the place. For what you know, I, loyal Ignatius, may be a spy. You see, that is the disadvantage of being an Island people. You never know. But I will tell you this. So long as you allow anyone but known men and women to enter and leave Britain, whether to America or Denmark, spies in your midst there will be. Your Government cannot be expected to understand that. It was not elected to run a great war. In law, no man is guilty until he has been proved so. You are ruled by lawyers whose principle is compromise. A Frenchman's theory, believe me, fatal to action, suicidal in war. Grotesque! But then you are a grotesque nation. You *will* assume virtue in others. You will think that other peoples have no significance in life. You will believe in amateurishness, in wooden conservatism. That is why I am a Liberal. See. I believe in the People. I say, trust the People, never lead them. They don't like it. Besides, it is unpopular, and you cannot be a politician unless you are popular. No, you can't be a politician and a Statesman, because the one is the contradiction of the other. You simply cannot tell the people they have got to submit to national discipline or be beaten because—well, you would lose your seat. *A quoi bon*, dear friend? Compromise, therefore. Go on compromising. You will win then—morally, but militarily you will lose. Yes, I'm frank. You see, I was once a Quaker teacher. I don't believe in fighting. I'm a man of principle. I believe in profits. Therefore, I say, compete. Don't organise. Don't have discipline. Every man for himself, and 'down tools' if

you don't like. That is the way. If the Kaiser himself were here, he would applaud me."

It really is profound matter of regret that this ex-M.P. is not in this country. Clergyman, Quaker, politician, sociologist, so accoutred with all the qualifications of the successful man, he would, no doubt, had he not become nasty, be to-day agitating with the best of them against the "wicked" people who "want to militarise the country." Here, again, he would know what he was talking about. Think of him on Tower Hill.

"Britons, lads, comrades, they want to make soldiers of you, to put you in uniform, to place you under discipline. Why? Because they hate the Liberal Idea. Because they hate the Unions. Because they would Prussianise this Island of Liberty. They would take the unmarried and save the married. Think of that injustice! They would say to a man, 'No, you have to make shells, you have to fight.' And they call that Freedom! They want to speed you up; to raise a conscripted Army, to organise your industries and economic forces, to break down the good old principle of Britain for Britons. Treason, I call it, un-English, anti-democratic. They place country before politics. What do you think of it? I say it is blasphemy, rank blasphemy. I am glad we did not arm before the war—it shows how innocent we are. I am glad we won't arm nationally now that there is war—it shows how optimistic we are. I am glad we trusted to luck for the first ten months—it shows what sportsmen we are. I am glad we still cling to our peace theories—it shows how unbusinesslike we are. I am glad we are getting ready in a gentlemanly way, which means that we are taking it easy—it shows how superior we are. I am glad that we are all talking, intriguing, arguing, and politicising—it shows what bloody fools we are—(loud laughter, cheers and jeers). You laugh, I thought so. The vernacular is good English stuff, isn't it? I say, hang on to it. Don't be misled by pessimists and militarists. Everything is all right. It always is. Italy has come in. You will have to give her a loan. Good. Go on loaning, but don't, for mercy's sake, forsake your political principles. The Party system depends upon your ignorance. Be ignorant and wise. It is folly to be otherwise. If you

don't want to fight, don't. Join a No-Fellowship corps. Develop a conscience—it is as good as a stomach-ache. Or a scruple or a theory, but don't let your unmarried men go to the war. Let them raise the limit to 45. That will 'cop' all the old married birds. They won't mind. They are probably fed up with married life. The State will keep their wives, their children. The State. Think of the State, not of country. The State pays, the country only asks. You have got a hold of the State by the vote, the country has to advertise. I am a firm believer in conscientious objection—to anything I don't like. And so, here's luck to the State which is you, and Damnation to Germany, if America comes in to help us."

We might follow our loyal Ignatius on a little trip to Ireland, watch him reviewing the Nationalist Army, commending them on their "smart appearance," their *discipline*, their *organisation*, their spirit of independence, hear him congratulate the officers for their noble self-denial which keeps them at home rather than on active service. Or, listen to him pontificating against national duty to a selected audience of Hibernian pacifists gathered together under the auspices of human charity. He would make his presence, too, felt in the Press.

With enthusiasm he would dwell in the proper organs on the spirit of independence displayed by Ministers; how when one Minister tried to rouse the country to the due appreciation of the war and its liabilities, another Minister would promptly contradict him by informing the people they were within a mile or so of victory. How, again, jealousy would show its political face to the disintegrating benefit of the whole.

Solemnly he would warn the Minister of Shells not to presume too much on the latitude allowed him; not to get too popular, too energetic, too business-like, too successful. The Cabinet was a corporate body, jealous of its rights and dignities. He would analyse the demarcations and limits of political truce. The Minister of Shells would have to be careful. No matter what *he* thought, there would be no compulsion, because the Party did not think the People would like it. The Party did not think the People ought to like it. Compulsion would upset the whole political morphology, of which the bowels were

opinion. Let the Minister beware of the friends of the Germans who would militarise Britain. They were Prussians, stupid men, the lowest kind of journalistic and political curmudgeons. They were laying a pitfall for the Celtic temperament. *We* would look with grave disfavour on any attempt of a Shell Minister to place the industrial workers of the country under any form of discipline or organisation that they and their *political* leaders did not entirely approve of.

In his leisure hours Mr. Lincoln would write a tract, "Why War is Foolish"; or he would dictate a treatise on the virtue of "Immobility in War"; and among other things he would become an expert. His military training would stand him in stead here; he would be awfully subtle, commercially optimistic, meticulously statistical and geographical, a very funambulist of information corrected and corrective, and always he would harp on the paying chord, "We must win because so many people are on our side." With his quick perception, he would realise at once that the best way to prevent Britain from getting to work nationally was to disseminate optimism and self-complacency, to try to brand those who knew the true state of things and sought to remedy them as pessimists, growlers and minimisers; by the aid of a few diagrams he would secure a public. And he would find such work easier and more remunerative than his attempts at espionage in 1914.

Could he not be repatriated? We might make an exchange, and offer him a safe seat. He might prove useful, for certainly he could tell us how to use the German gas, and that would be something. In these days we should be thankful for what we can get.

O, Pundits, humanitarians, countrymen, politicians, ought we not to send for him? Is it right at this hour that we should be without the *politics* of the ex-M.P. for Darlington? He might, if we accorded him a free passage and pardon, come back and tell us even the truth, as a soldier and not as a politician; tell us that if we don't stop our politics and prepare now to fight Germany as she is fighting us, we shall only have our politicians to blame if they land us in the abyss of stalemate.

National Effort

By Austin Harrison

On July 4th the war will have lasted eleven months, and so far the results are purely negative. True, the Germans, if peace were declared to-day or to-morrow, could claim the victory; but we stand midway in the war; as yet there have been no decisions, while the moral and economic forces of the world tend to rise in increasing volume against them. All the same, the Germans have annexed Belgium; in the field they have repulsed and kept at bay the Russian Armies, inflicting prodigious losses upon them, and still they maintain the potentiality of the offensive East and West; and on the seas their submarine initiative grows stronger and more efficient.

For these all-round negative results the casualties amount roughly to 9,000,000 men killed, wounded, and prisoners, of whom some 5,000,000 belong to the Entente. This, in sportsmen's parlance, is the "bag." Nor does this figure touch the Turkish losses or the Italian losses, and it is going up all the time, week by week, in increasing ratio with the warm weather. And to these negative results must be added a financial waste such as mankind has never known or contemplated.

Such is a cold statement of the situation which, militarily, may be summed up as stagnation. The conditions of war have changed, that is all, and with them the determining factors.

As Clausewitz long ago insisted, and that curious professorial military genius, Bloch, predicted, the *offensive-defensive* has become the paramount key of war to the neutralisation of all preconceptions of tactics or strategy.

For nine months that has been the problem in France and in Flanders: we find it against the Turks in the peninsula. On the Eastern side, positional warfare, as the Germans technically describe it, has not been the feature of the campaign; but there the other and new factor of

modern war operates—numbers, and so the difficulty of securing decisions. It is true that this is only relatively correct. Had the French, for instance, lost the three and odd millions of men that the Russians are credibly reputed to have lost, the fighting power of France might reasonably be said to be exhausted. But in the case of Russia this is not so. The Russians could lose ten million men and still, as regards sheer numbers, be unbeaten, though from the point of view of military efficiency this obviously would not be true. And this, of course, is the reason of the German Eastern offensive. They fear the Russian millions, but they know that the higher the Russian casualties the less efficient, owing to insufficient training, the loss of trained officers and the loss of fighting prestige, must the Russian war machine become.

Against the Russians, therefore, the German object is attrition, in order so to weaken the Russian offensive as to free their own for service elsewhere. But modern battles are not conclusive. Rout, panic, annihilation—these have been discovered to be obsolete ideas of war against modern weapons and the gigantic armies of to-day; (1) because of the enormous space occupied by the forces and consequently the impossibility of capturing more than a part or fraction of the whole; (2) because the modern weapon, artillery and the machine-gun, are pre-eminently defensive or protective, against which the missile of attack, except in intensity of fire, has no advantage whatever.

The offensive has thus become out of all proportion difficult and costly, precisely as Bloch stated it. Technical conditions being relatively equal, it is a matter of commonsense to see that the defensive is thus enormously the strongest position, which can only be broken by prodigious sacrifice of life. But defensive positions to-day are prepared, only too easily prepared; men no longer flee, their arm is too deadly and they are well aware of it. The capture of one position only leads to another, which again has to be taken with frightful loss of life; and facing that is a third position, and beyond yet another, and so on, a maze of trenches, fortifications, earthworks, and prepared positions, each one as strongly fortified and held as the other, each one equally as disastrous to the offensive.

The Germans realised that danger even before the war,

and it is the explanation of their massed attacks. With that cold deliberation that characterises the German, their soldiers went to war on a table of losses. They saw that the offensive meant huge sacrifices, they knew that extreme mobility was their great chance. Hence the lightning rapidity of their invasion, their rage at its frustration and delay in Belgium. They had the men to throw away. A million would not matter. Rifle-fire for the offensive they discounted—rightly: their men in a general way were instructed to fire anyhow from the hip. It was a question of losses, the numbers that could safely be spared. Nor can it be doubted but that, given the conditions of surprise and the extreme mobility of an enormous army carefully trained for years for the specific object of treacherous invasion, their central idea was militarily sound. That it miscarried was due solely to the incalculable, always a determinant in war, and the stupidity of the German politicians who never thought the Belgians would fight.

Had the Belgians not fought, and had they allowed the German millions to pour unmolested through Belgium into France, there can be little question that, with the enormous German superiority in men and weapons, their massed onslaughts would have prevailed before even we could have thrown our magnificent, if small, army into France. It might have cost the Germans a million or more in men, but they were prepared for that sacrifice. Once they had "rushed" France, the Western campaign would have been over, and they would have been free to deal with Russia. All this is past history, but it is relevant to recall it, because it is still the history of the war in that it is still the explanation and problem of the whole military position.

What the Germans realised and feared before the war has come to pass—only we also have discovered it. The three determinants of the German successful offensive—time, mobility, and overwhelming numbers—failed them, owing to the resistance of the Belgians and the splendid self-sacrificial advance of the Russians into East Prussia. The secret of modern war, which the Germans undoubtedly had discovered prior to hostilities, passed from them with the delay in Belgium. As the German gamble in gun-carrion depended entirely on time—surprise, so with the battle of the Marne time struck in our favour. It became

no longer an arithmetical question of losses; the Germans no longer had the gun-carrion necessary for successful attack. They had lost the advantage and knew it. From the first day of positional warfare the Germans morally lost the campaign.

Only morally, however; the moral factor in war has lost its former significance, because man is no longer the primal agency. The war entered upon a new phase—the phase foreseen and feared by the German General Staff as the result of initial failure. All that human will and energy could do, they had done. The new phase meant relative equality of strength, technical or trench warfare, the numbers on both sides being relatively equal; in a word, the military condition for the obviation of which all their secret plans of railway construction, rapid mobilisation, surprise, massed attacks, and overwhelming heavy gun-fire were designed; and it has been the condition on the West ever since. The question to them, the question to us, is: What next?

Indefinite stagnation might lead to victory in three or five years' time, but it would be a victory at the price of ruin. We know how, before last August, war was solemnly pronounced to be impossible by financial experts and theorists, to-day we find ourselves cheerfully paying close on £3,000,000 a day. Our daily expenditure will increase not only with the increasing wear and intensity of output, material and equipment, pensions and liabilities, but also as our war engagements and loans multiply: they will multiply. Soon we may be spending £4,000,000 a day; in six months' time we may quite likely be spending £5,000,000 a day. We are not a self-supporting people—the German-Austrian Empire is. On the seas, we have no target—their target is our artery of sea-borne trade. We are spending certainly twice as much for our fighting forces as the Germans are, relatively and actually. After all, imports are paid by exports; when both are stopped, neutralisation need not imply negation. It does not, as we are all seeing, in war which, while it lasts, makes good business. To count on starving out Germany is speculation, which is not the object of war. To wait for the *dégringolade* of the Austro-German economic fabric might prove a very unfortunate speculation, all the more when

we take into consideration the potentialities of the German submarine warfare and our own haphazard dependency on over-sea support.

Nor would it be wise to reckon in the East on the *impossibility* of military decisions. Mere numbers are not sufficient. It is for this reason that the Eastern campaign chiefly "interests" the German General Staff, because, where there is open fighting, results are still potentially attainable. Results of attrition so formidable that even the Russians may not be able to cope with them. There, however, the Germans are fighting on their chances. They are taking them because the offensive is the spirit of their military science. In short, they are fighting the Russians for stagnation, even as the military conditions of modern warfare entail stagnation whether in the open or in the trenches.

From whichever side we view it, whether from that of the Entente or the Alliance, whether from the open side on the East or the deadlock in the West, whether from the South or the Turkish peninsula, whether in the air or on the seas, we find the same elements of modern national warfare making for the negational conditions of stagnation. The German fighting fleet remains intact. Everywhere the protective power of modern weapons defies the offensive, and where there is mobility there is the elusiveness of numbers, and always the delay, owing to the difficulties of moving and supplying the big guns, as the result of victory.

The Germans, who fight methodically and scientifically without any of the *beau geste* of war ennobled by the French, realised these things months back and immediately set to work to find their technical solution. While here we rubbed our hands with glee over the millions of Germans killed and placed *hors de combat*, the Germans sought the aid of their chemists, scientists, and military engineers. At the beginning of this year they saw the necessity of economy of forces and of a new technique to meet the new conditions.

Instead (as we thought) of losing men on the Western front by the ten thousand a day, the Germans have been saving men all these months; first, by their high-explosive shells and intensity of fire; secondly, by economy in the

costly counter-attack; thirdly, by the rapid development of the machine-gun which is in modern war what the needle-gun was to the Prussians at Königgrätz.

We have often wondered how they "have done it," where the men came from? Technical application is the explanation. They applied their intelligence to the situation, whereas we went on with the old traditions and contrivances. They invented a powerful defence of barbed-wire entanglements; they concreted trenches. While we at home were led to believe that the Germans were straining every energy in the land to hold the Western front, the truth is that their wire, their machine-guns, their technical appliances and adaptability have enabled them to hold their lines with infinitely inferior forces to those of the Allies opposed to them, and almost certainly with far fewer losses. And this has gone on for month after month.

In reality, there is nothing to clap our hands about. Nor can we afford any longer to go on fighting in the old afternoon way as if we were Brer Rabbit lolloping down the road with one of the Miss Meadows.

It is not a question of optimism or pessimism, both attitudes are misplaced; the need to-day is of national effort. After ten months of fighting we discovered that we had the wrong kind of shell; and that the war-producing capacities of the country were not only largely unorganised but unutilised. Lulled by ignorance, strangled by the censorship, cozened by Ministerial secrecy and optimism, we told one another the tale: "We could break through any day we pleased." Then came the German gas, the first fruits of their laboratories, the revelations of Lord Northcliffe (but for which we might still be turning out the wrong shell and producing at quarter strength), leading to the Coalition and the prospect of a truer conception of the difficulties. We have begun to understand, because at last we have *admitted the truth.**

So, we wake up—after eleven months of fighting. I do not think, even now, that we grasp the full needs of the situation. Once more we have allowed the Germans to

* In this REVIEW I said five months ago that the secrecy imposed by the Government would lead to the fall of the Government, and that we were completely underrating the enemy, both as regards moral, numbers, and technical efficiency.

get ahead of us in technical efficiency. If they started the war with a great superiority in technical equipment and lost their strategic superiority at the Marne, they have to-day recovered their technical superiority. While we were supplying rifles, they turned out machine-guns. While we were making shrapnel, they made high-explosive shells, and experimented with cast-iron shells which can be fabricated quicker. While we waited for the "June offensive," they were turning out gas—submarines, howitzers, Zeppelins, aircraft and what not, revising and reconstituting their whole technical machinery. In a word, while we were thinking only of raising the men, the Germans turned to the chemistry of war, which is to-day its decisive factor.

Though this is now pretty generally admitted, we still hesitate—to arm and prepare to fight at full strength. A soldier said to me the other day: "I would not like to be in a trench with conscripted men." The remark is typical of our conservatism. What reason is this? The argument leaves out of account that our Allies, the French, the Russians, the Belgians, the Italians, the Serbs, and our terrible enemy, too, are conscripted men, all of them; and that if France to-day was not able to fight on a national basis, she and we would by this time have lost the war. Our Army is fighting with, and under, the supreme command of a conscripted army. If we win, it will be because of the conscripted armies fighting for us.

It is because Russia has conscription that she is able to pour her masses against the Germans. It is because France is fighting every man available on two legs that *we are able to go on academically discussing the voluntary principle.* It is because we have not got national service, which means not only service but national organisation, technical system, and discipline, that in the eleventh month of the war we discover that we have the wrong shells, rifles instead of machine-guns, an inferior technique, a ludicrously insufficient output of munitions, an unorganised, undisciplined effort at half strength in lieu of the precision, the order, and the striking efficiency of national co-operation. It is no use saying we don't like changing our principle and methods; that is not the question. The problem which faces us to-day is necessity. Opinion has

nothing to do with it. Party has nothing to do with it. Principle has nothing to do with it, or border-feud tradition, or Trade Unionism, or individualism. We are at war, when these words are printed in the twelfth month of stagnation, and the sole question is: How are we going to obtain the technical efficiency and the fighting power necessary to smash our way through the German lines?

We talk of the voluntary principle. Illusion. There is no such thing as Liberty in this mad world. When the other day a shell-maker was tried for bashing in the head of another shell-maker because he "worked too quickly," the Sheriff did not congratulate the man on his individualist independence: he told him that if he were a Frenchman he would have been put up against a wall and shot, and expressed "regret" that he could not sentence him to be shot here. Where is the voluntary principle in this incident? There is none, any more than there is in the advertising persecution which persuades men to join the Army. The truth is, we hate to face facts. It is our national attitude to think what *we want to think.* Just as we hate criticism, so we love to pretend—to pretend we are fighting on the voluntary principle, whereas in reality we are resorting to all kinds of subterfuge and intimidation which costs the country five times more than national service, and leads to chaos, wastage, and irritation.

It need not be a matter of compulsion, though it might have to be in the case of Ireland. Nor is it in the least that hated militarism which, for all the scorn we have heaped upon it, is literally staggering humanity by its example of national unity, efficiency, self-sacrifice, and devotion. Britons will always fight; what is needed is not so much compulsion as leadership.

This war is like no other in history; it is a racial movement of conquest, which can only now end with the utter exhaustion of one or the other of the belligerent groups. Neither numbers nor bravery will win; these are no longer the determinants of war. Our problem is simply the quickest way to catch up and match the enemy's technical organisation and efficiency, so that by sheer fighting superiority we may beat him down.

From the Germans we may expect anything. I have not the smallest doubt that their bacteriologists are think-

ing out some diabolical device for the dissemination of disease; that their electricians are trying to solve the problem of wholesale electrocution; that all the inventors in Germany are experimenting with new lethal projections, and that the Germans will employ as many of them as are serviceable. All the time they are improving their machinery, whereas here our inventors, creators, scientists, engineers, chemists, and discoverers are immobilised, all these months unwanted and unheard. This is what we must change if we are to beat the appliances of the Germans. And this is the power that national service would give us.

Weeks ago the Germans astonished us with their gas. I believe I am correct in saying that we have not retaliated. Why? Most of the modern inventions of war have come from the Entente peoples—Marconi, the torpedo, the submarine, the airship, the motor, the machine-gun, etc. Why have the Entente Powers not mobilised their inventors, their artists, their engineers, their chemists? How is it that we have not long ago established an Entente thinking department of war on the lines of the Krupp-Charlottenburg electro-chemical staff? Why is it that a man like Sir William Ramsay should have to carry on a newspaper controversy to make the Government understand that gun-cotton is made from cotton and so ought to be contraband?

Because we are lacking in Government. Because it has taken us ten months to realise that war is a business and must be conducted on business principles, *i.e.*, organisation and discipline. Because, in fine, we stick to our casual or chaotic system.

Ministers contradict one another. With pompous aspersions we segregate the German submarine crews and are "surprised" to hear that our poor fellows are imprisoned in consequence in Germany. We vacillate. Time passes and still our men are confined in gaol, and then—we give way. It is just the same with the aliens. We cannot make up our minds. Always we hesitate, dubitate, wait and see, while suggestions pour in from all sides, and when Mr. Lloyd George makes a great speech and tells the truth another Minister goes down to another constituency and gives him the direct lie.

We have got to that pitch that people are now classified

as optimists or pessimists—the real pessimists are the weaklings who cannot face facts—and this division is even manifest in the new Coalition. When Mr. Asquith was asked by Sir Henry Dalziel to explain his Newcastle speech on April 20th, he replied, he said what he said "on the best possible authority." But where is the authority? That is the whole point. In reality, Mr. Asquith's reply was evasive. As the Head of the Government he is *responsible.** His somewhat lachrymose regrets about parting with old Cabinet friends were irrelevant. He treated the question as Party sentiment, without responsibility.

What with Mr. Churchill talking about "surplus ships," and the revelations of "surplus meat" buried by the soldiers, and the surplus energies of the country still largely unutilised, it is no matter of surprise that we have allowed the Germans to outstrip us in technical efficiency, and that the majority of people in these Islands have no focal appreciation of the task before them. Hush-policy to-day is unpatriotic; nothing could please the Germans more. So long as we have the voluntary principle, which means wastage and muddle, we must have criticism, or there will be no truth, and so no national effort possible, and no responsible leadership.

I believe—I would not venture to write a word had I not studied the Germans and their military system and methods for fifteen years—that, no matter what European Power comes to our assistance, this war will tax our resources to their utmost stretch, and that we alone possess the men and the means to conquer. We mean to win. That being so, the question is how, in the quickest time.

There is one sure way—National effort. Eight months ago we ought to have militarised Britain, divided the country up into spheres of war-producing activities and turned the land into an arsenal. Had we done so, we should not be faced with such outrageous scandals as that of spelter, for instance. Even to-day it is not too late, for the winter will help us. But if we slumber any longer, it will be too late, and that is Mr. Lloyd George's responsibility.

* Mr. Pease said, June 23rd, "We had no idea" machine guns were so important. But the soldiers knew. I knew. In this REVIEW last December I wrote: "The need is of machine guns."

His duty is to act, like a business man; to employ business men, to run the Munitions question fearlessly on national business lines.

That means the Government must take the people into their confidence, tell them the truth, explain to them the requirements, and enrol them to do their duty. The people will not fail. But they must be led and we must have business direction. Call it Democratic altruism, if we like, the nomenclature does not matter twopence—the effort is all. Our real trouble is the haphazard principle. Not only the men, but the brains of Britain must be mobilised—we have far better brains than the Germans, only they use theirs; we don't think it is "good form" to use ours. The first thing is for the Coalition to make up its (National) mind—now: and to act unswervingly. If we, as we have protested, are to drive the Germans out of Belgium and fight them to their knees, we shall have to meet them with their own weapons, organisation, methods, and appliances, and with superior technique and numbers too. Short of the incalculable, I believe that task will necessitate the mobilisation of the full male fighting energies of the country, and of the full productive, economic, and creative forces behind them.

I say this as my deliberate opinion. If the Coalition * does not face the facts, and by compulsion, advertisement, or persuasion, it fails to raise and equip the National forces necessary, it will fall, as the late Government fell, and then in all probability we shall find the bauble of political amateurishness once more swept away by a soldier: who will carry out the needful changes and reforms *for the Army and with the Army*.

* Mr. Tennant's answers are earning an unenviable notoriety for facetious evasion. His reply to Mr. Mason on the important matter of enlisting married men was flippant and silly. His joke about the recruiting sergeant and men "enjoying matrimonial" life was utterly unworthy of a Government at war. It is not a funny matter, but an economic question of serious national importance. Why this schoolboy attitude? The Coalition will be wise to bear in mind that short shrift will be made of those who "blunder" or "don't know" in the future.

Books

FICTION

Hyssop. By M. T. H. Sadler. Constable. 6*s*.

It is fairly safe to suppose this a first novel. Pressing conjecture a little further, we might even guess that the author is still a young man, and one who has studied Compton Mackenzie and the detail-realists rather well than wisely. The result is that he has written a description of Oxford undergraduate life (being himself perhaps freshly thence) which will delight two readers and bore three. He has certainly caught wonderfully well the atmosphere of a place in which everybody is doing nothing that matters with an enormous sense of importance. But we have the feeling that Mr. Sadler is too close to his subject to draw it in proper proportion. He sees his hero as clearly, and writes about him as minutely, in the morning tub as in the pangs of unrequited passion. One might paraphrase the old lament—if age could remember, if youth could select! Still, the first part of the tale is pleasant enough, in its ambling fashion, for those who will not get impatient at the delay in reaching any crisis. To employ a familiar phrase, Mr. Sadler deliberately postpones his offensive till the last three chapters. When it comes, however, it is strong; a grim and humanly tragic situation, not altogether for the young person, but discreetly handled. By that time the hero has been removed from the leisure of Oxford into the more bracing air of New York. Perhaps this explains why events begin to hustle. But Mr. Sadler has a masterful way of treating them that convinces us that he is a writer of genuine promise, whose further work may be expected with interest.

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

The Partitions of Poland. By Lord Eversley. T. Fisher Unwin, Limited.

Lord Eversley, as a veteran statesman of the great Gladstone epoch of the 'sixties, the 'seventies, and the

'eighties, has devoted his retirement to a careful study of the series of public crimes from 1772 to 1795 by which the kingdom of Poland was destroyed, and finally divided up between Russia, Prussia, and Austria. This branch of international history is singularly *à propos* at present. It throws a lurid light on the actions of Germany and Austria to-day: and its concluding chapter "The Poles under three Masters," and the map of the distribution of the Polish race, form valuable materials to solve the problem of the ultimate settlement of this secular trouble of peace in Europe.

One of the most striking points brought out by this chapter of eighteenth century history is the proof that Prussia has pursued the same course of aggression, treachery, and cruelty towards less warlike neighbours ever since it became a kingdom of European importance. Lord Eversley's first chapter, and its very impressive map of Poland in 1772, shows at a glance the conditions of the national tragedy—when the anarchy of the kingdom invited destruction by the three monarchies round it, all alike greedy and unscrupulous. "Against such a remarkable combination of intellect, determination, perfidy, and lawlessness the unfortunate Poles, with their anarchic constitution, their lack of a strong executive, and their paralysed Diet, were quite unable to make resistance." It was a tragedy lasting twenty-three years in three separate Acts, opened by the great names of Frederick the Great, the Tsarina Catherine, and the Empress Maria Theresa. The intellect, the perfidy, and the criminality of their conduct may be apportioned to each sovereign in the same order. All that can be said for Frederick personally is that his part of the booty in 1772 was far the least in extent, and so essential to his own kingdom as to seem inevitable. All that can be said for the Empress Maria Theresa is that she was far the least guilty, and her descendants have been far less oppressive and tyrannous.

The story is continued by Lord Eversley through the European Revolution, the Empire of Napoleon, the Congress of Vienna, and then down to the era of Bismarck and von Bülow in 1907. It is one long story of rapacity, fraud, treachery, and oppression, in which Russia has been the most successful, Prussia the most perfidious, and Austria the least barbarous. The Poles as a race have much analogy with that of the Jews. Persecuted, trampled

on, torn into fragments by successive waves of conquerors, they have never lost their intense pride of ancestry, their religion, or their fecundity; and with each persecution they seem to rise more indestructible and hopeful. The essential difference is this. Intense as is the racial patriotism of the Jews, they have for 2,000 years lost all idea of true Nationality, even the germ of Nationality, except for the silly fad called Zionism. On the other hand, the Poles have remained a Nation for a century and a half, in spite of conquerors, tyrants, and oppressors, throughout the broken vows of kings and emperors, and the false treaties and contracts of statesmen in Congress. In this the Poles are more akin to the Irish than to the Jews. The history of Poland, especially in their own internal divisions and rebellions, has close analogy with the history of Ireland.

A part of Lord Eversley's book which has peculiar interest, and to many readers would have the effect of novelty, is contained in Chapter VIII.—"How Poland Saved France." Some historians of Europe in the eighteenth century seem to have missed this dominant fact altogether. The immense upheaval of the institutions, State system, and international relations of the European Powers that arose out of what we call the French Revolution of 1789 was so vast and striking that we are apt to concentrate attention on the French Republic, the Consulate, and Empire of Napoleon, and we do not watch so closely the intricate interaction of the Powers lying east of the Vistula and the Oder. Lord Eversley, keeping our interest fixed on the Poles, their despoilers, their masters, and their furious uprisings against all, shows how largely the task of destroying and dividing the vast area of the Polish Kingdom caused the three Eastern monarchies to quarrel, circumvent, and outbid each other; and, by absorbing their forces now against the Poles, now against each other, drew off the Eastern sovereigns from France and their original aim to destroy the Republic. Britain alone was bent on saving the principle of Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Order. The three Eastern Powers were bent on getting all they could get of Poland; they allowed the French Republic to dominate Western Europe. Thus, "Poland saved France."

The poor return for this service by France—whether by the Consulate, Napoleon, Talleyrand, the Restoration, or the Orleanist Dynasty—is sufficiently traced by Lord Eversley, as are the feeble remonstrances of Pitt, Castle-

reagh, Wellington, and Palmerston. In the tragedy of Poland Britain has had no direct part, and can be charged only with timidity, feebleness, and futile rhetoric. Our statesmen have often used noble language, and almost from first to last had good "intention." But it was always impracticable for Britain to offer effective help to a country with the geographical, political, religious, and racial conditions of Poland. And when British Chanceries wrote despatches to Tsars and Emperors to observe treaties and to cease from oppression, the inevitable answer was returned—"What about your own Ireland?"

It is far too soon yet to speculate about the Future of Poland, or indeed about any settlement of Europe at the end of this World-War. But those who feel inclined to consider plans for a reconstituted Poland should study Lord Eversley's "Ethnographical Map of the Distribution of Poles" facing page 317. It shows in three colours representing population of Poles in 80 per cent., 50 per cent., and 20 per cent. proportion, in the vast area reaching from Galicia to the Baltic near Dantzig, from Vilna to Lemberg, and the basins of the Vistula and the Niemen. The whole Chapter XV., showing the subsequent history of Russian, Prussian, and Austrian Poland after the final partition at the Congress of 1815, explains the intricate entanglements of the Polish problem, and the way in which the three Eastern Empires have failed to carry out their pledges, and have used their respective conquests. One hundred years have passed since the sovereigns met at Vienna; and the record is one that marks with incurable perfidy and lawlessness the diplomacy of Europe. Poland is still, as it has been for 150 years, the battle-ground of its mighty neighbours. But Poland is still a living nation, is still indestructible, still hopeful and faithful to the last.

POETRY

THE COMMON DAY. By STEPHEN SOUTHWOLD. Allen and Unwin. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

ESCAPES AND ESCAPADES. By HENRY SAVAGE. The Pomegranate Press. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

Browsing on Heliconian meads—in other words, glancing through certain slim volumes that issue unheralded, but with rather bewildering frequency, from the

press, we light upon "The Common Day." There is good work here, which we would recommend to our readers; there is distinction, and an Elizabethan smack—particularly in the sonnets, with their crafty antitheses. Mr. Southwold reserves his sonnets for grave matters, and whoever wishes for a taste of his quality in this form cannot do better than read the first and last poems in the book (both of which, we believe, have appeared in the ENGLISH REVIEW). The other poems deal with more mundane subjects—with the delights of childhood, for instance, which our poet interprets with great sympathy. We find him somewhat obsessed—or at least pre-occupied—with questions of God and Death. No matter! Some people think a good deal about God and Death, and it is not a bad sign when it indicates, as we feel sure it does in the present case, that our poet is still young. For then we can promise ourselves the pleasure of another volume from his pen, in the days to come.

Mr. Henry Savage, whose name we also remember seeing in the ENGLISH REVIEW, cannot be bothered with abstractions; he writes in lighter vein; he is the "slave of spring"—elusive and wayward as an April day. There is not much celestial flavour here, but some pretty earthly conceits, as in that poem where the bard warbles sweetly of how—

> The bloater in the Adriatic
> Idly pursues his course erratic,
> Nor dreams that fate will lead him to
> The hungry poet in his attic—

or when he gives the following sound advice to prose writers:

> Let your work be as bad as it will,
> It's the effort that counts, not the phrases;
> The sun will come over the hill
> Though the night be as long as your face is.

Altogether, an attractive little volume.

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